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The Nation.

March 28, 1981 $1

EDITORIAL

AGONY IN ATLANTA

When Ronald Reagan took over the Presidency, a report from his Civil Rights Commission was on his desk. It read, in part:

> Racially motivated violence and group hatred, widespread acts of animosity, such as cross-burnings and vandalism of churches and synagogues, and the rising number of civil disorders across the country triggered by violent treatment of minorities by law-enforcement officials, all have contributed to an atmosphere that impedes civil rights progress.

In view of subsequent developments, the conclusion of this report seems mild enough. Reagan has never been accused of missing out on any issue of public concern or public relations.

His response? To put his Vice President, traditional guardian of the nonissue, on the Atlanta case. Many blacks will see in this a reflection of general indifference. After all, Vernon Jordan's assailant is still at large. The massacre of the innocents in Atlanta may be a big media whodunit now, but for months the city suffered in virtual silence. In New York and Buffalo ugly racial murders have gone unpunished. The Greensboro, North Carolina, acquittals hark back to an era of all-white juries and lynch law. Miami had to burn to draw attention to itself. And now we have a Government whose policies write off whole sections of the American poor as expendable. Is all this coincidence?

The word is out that poverty has gone out of style as an issue, that racial minorities are not this year's, or even this decade's, fashion. Now, the victims are held responsible for their own plight and portrayed as greedy welfare and food stamp cheats. It is not unreasonable to say that this Administration's calculated and open indifference to the rights and needs of blacks and other minorities has only worsened the climate of bigotry and violence in this country.

SAY IT AIN'T SO, WALTER
Blair Clark

CARTER URBAN REPORT
Thomas Bender

THE KIRKPATRICK DOCTRINE
Penny Lernoux

THE WAR ON ANTITRUST
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LITERARY HUMOR
Alice K. Turner

INVENTED RED MENACE

WHITE PAPER ON THE WHITE PAPER

JAMES PETRAS

The State Department's white paper entitled *Communist Interference in El Salvador* purports to provide evidence demonstrating:

(*1*) "the central role played by Cuba and other Communist countries . . . in the political unification, military direction and arming of insurgent forces in El Salvador";

(*2*) that "the insurgency in El Salvador has been progressively transformed into another case of indirect armed aggression against a small Third World country by Communist powers acting through Cuba"; and

(*3*) that "Cuba, the Soviet Union and other Communist states . . . are carrying out what is clearly shown to be a well-coordinated, covert effort to bring about the overthrow of El Salvador's established Government and to impose in its place a Communist regime with no popular support."

The white paper fails to provide a convincing case for any of those propositions. On the contrary, its evidence is flimsy, circumstantial or nonexistent; the reasoning and logic is slipshod and internally inconsistent; it assumes what needs to be proven; and, finally, what facts are presented refute the very case the State Department is attempting to demonstrate. The document, in a word, has the aura of a political frame-up in which inconvenient facts are overlooked and innuendoes and unwarranted inferences are made at crucial points in the argument. In demonstrating this, I will follow the format of the white paper, discussing the sections in order, under their original titles, and making cross-references to material in other sec-

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LETTERS.

EXXON CORRECTS

Houston

On January 17, you printed an article by Fred J. Cook, "Big Oil Steps on the Independent Gas Dealers." The general thrust of the article is that major oil companies are forcing retail gasoline dealers out of business in order to take over the stations for company operation. The first point made to support this contention is that large numbers of dealers in New Jersey and Florida have been forced out of business. Admittedly, there has been a nationwide decline in the number of gasoline dealers leasing service stations from refiners—but it is not correct to assume that all such dealers have been "forced out of business."

The decline in the overall number of service stations is attributable mainly to changing market conditions such as the decline in motor fuel demand, inflationary cost pressures and competition. These factors have influenced refiners to dispose of uneconomic stations or to change the method by which certain stations are supplied. Dealers, however, often purchase the station they are operating when a refiner elects to disinvest. Alternatively, the dealer may elect to lease the location from the new owner and continue in business. Unfortunately, when the new owner and/or supplier is a jobber, the station may not be included in some store count data. The Department of Energy data, for example, do not include jobber-served outlets. About half of the dealers in stations being disposed of by Exxon either buy the station, lease it from the new owner, or transfer to another Exxon location.

The suggestion that major refiners are attempting to convert all of their dealer operations to company operations simply is not true. There has not been an increase in service stations operated by large integrated refiners. In 1979, the latest year for which Department of Energy data are available, such stores make up less than 5 percent of the nation's retail outlets. The same data indicate a modest 1 percent average annual growth in all refiner-operated stations since 1972. Independent and small refiners account for all of this growth.

In 1978, rather than pass a law banning retail operations, the Congress required the Department of Energy to study the role of vertically integrated petroleum companies in the marketing of gasoline. The final report was issued in January 1981. The Department of Energy found, among other things, that there has not been a massive movement by refiners into the direct retailing of gasoline, and recommended against legislation that would prohibit major refiners from operating service stations. Simply stated, such legislation is unnecessary, anticompetitive and anticonsumer.

The article quotes a dealer in Miami who alleges that Exxon wants to take over all the independents in that area, and then recounts his experience with an Exxon lease. To begin, Exxon has no intention or plans to convert to company operation all dealer operations in Miami or anywhere else. Actually, the number of Exxon company-operated stations has been declining—from more than 1,600 stations in 1972 to less than 700 today. In Florida, Exxon company-operated stations also have been declining—from forty-five in 1978 to thirty-nine, or 5.5 percent of the total Exxon-branded retail outlets in Florida, at year end 1980.

With respect to the dealer's allegations concerning his lease, Exxon does not use service station rentals as a means to drive dealers out of business. We are heavily committed to dealer operations, and we negotiate equitable rents individually with our dealers. Also, we can find no case in the Miami area where Exxon offered a lease to a dealer with the rental terms described in the article.

At least three of the article's other inaccurate and misleading statements also require comment. An average service station rental increase of 70 percent was quoted for what appeared to be New Jersey dealers. In Exxon's case, dealer rents in New Jersey increased 11.5 percent between 1979 and 1980. Comments also were made concerning tie-in arrangements of tire, battery and accessory purchases for assured gasoline supplies. Exxon does not practice such arrangements, which are prohibited under existing antitrust laws. These same laws offer a remedy to any dealer faced with the alleged tie-in requirement. Furthermore, Exxon's current leases and sales agreements do not require the dealer to purchase motor fuel exclusively from Exxon. If a dealer wishes to sell a non-Exxon branded motor fuel, he may do so providing he uses adequate signing so that his customers are not misled.

In summary, it would appear that Cook failed to investigate his subject thoroughly. Certainly, your readers deserve a more balanced view of the subject.

R. A. Pierpont Jr.
Marketing Dept., Exxon

COOK REPLIES

Interlaken, N.J.

I am hurt to the core that Mr. Pierpont has taken such umbrage at my *Nation* article, but I fear that Pierpont will have to quarrel with many persons other than just me. As it happens, on February 23, I was on a half-hour discussion program, *Mid-Day Live*, in Phoenix, with Brent Crosby, head of the Arizona Petroleum Retail Dealers Association. Crosby's attention had been drawn to the *Nation* article by a State Senator, who sent it to him with the comment: "Just substitute the name of Arizona for New Jersey, and it is the picture of what is happening here." Crosby agreed that it certainly was.

Pierpont quarrels with my assertion that big oil companies are hiking rents of independents to impossible levels to force local station operators to close their bays and just pump gasoline—or to get out of business. Unfortunately for him, the precise figures I quoted on these unconscionable rent hikes came from Joel Jacobson, commissioner of the Department of Energy in New Jersey, who had copies of 1,000 contracts that were being newly negotiated when I spoke to him.

It might also be well for Pierpont to read the November 30, 1980, issue of *The Miami Herald*, whose off-lead, front-page story was headlined: "Oil Firms Pressure Stations." The story said in part: "Throughout South Florida and many other parts of the nation, service station operators insist that they are being forced out of business by profit-hungry oil companies that publicly support conservation but privately demand that their outlets sell an ever-increasing amount of fuel." The story added: "Major oil companies, trying to maximize profits . . . are imposing huge rent increases on dealers who lease their stations."

Of course, Joel Jacobson, Brent Crosby, *The Miami Herald* and I all must be wrong. Only Exxon is right. It is really sad.

Fred J. Cook

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EDITORIALS.

Legislating Life

Anti-abortion forces have a new strategy for reversing *Roe* v. *Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that struck down criminal penalties for abortion. The virtue of the new tactic is that it enables them to bypass the cumbersome process of adopting a constitutional amendment.

A bright young graduate of the Harvard Law School, Stephen Galebach, is the brains behind this strategy. He has seized upon the Supreme Court's refusal in *Roe* v. *Wade* to determine when life begins. In his majority opinion, Justice Harry Blackmun had pointed out that "When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer." Accordingly, Blackmun held that the Supreme Court could not determine that a compelling interest in protecting human life justified state intrusion into a woman's private right to decide whether to bear a child. Galebach would have Congress act under the power given it in the Fourteenth Amendment to adopt legislation enforcing that amendment and simply declare that a fetus is a person from the moment of conception, thus settling by fiat an issue on which scientists, philosophers and theologians differ. Once Congress has answered (to its own satisfaction, anyhow) what President Ronald Reagan called at his March 6 press conference "the whole question about abortion," namely, "determining when and what is a human being," the fetus would be protected against legal abortions. For the Fourteenth Amendment clearly states that no state shall "deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law."

Moreover, if the fetus is legally a person, the states could impose criminal penalties for abortions. "Once the unborn

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child's status as human life and as a person is established by a branch of the government exercising power to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment," Galebach argues, "the states then have a constitutional standard of 'life' and 'person' to which they can refer. As the Supreme Court acknowledged in *Roe* v. *Wade*, the state then has a valid interest in protecting unborn life, and any challenge to a state's anti-abortion statute collapses."

Galebach's proposal is very clever. It has been endorsed by President Reagan and embodied in legislation introduced in Congress by those redoubtable friends of the fetus, Senator Jesse Helms and Representative Henry Hyde. They expect to bring the legislation to a vote by early summer.

Clever as this proposal is, however, it does not give the Supreme Court grounds for reversing *Roe* v. *Wade*. For one thing, it ignores the opening words of the Fourteenth Amendment which refer to "All persons born or naturalized in the United States. . . ." Although the word "person" is used more broadly in subsequent passages of the amendment, that was done to include aliens under the amendment's protections, and the extension does not have, as Justice Blackmun noted in *Roe* v. *Wade*, "any possible pre-natal applications." Galebach's proposed declaration by Congress, therefore, would not suffice to provide Fourteenth Amendment protection for fetuses, who are, of course, not "born."

It seems likely that some of the proponents of the Congressional declaration are aware of this defect. Even so, there is nothing irrational in their approach. The Supreme Court has been wavering in its support for the principles of *Roe* v. *Wade*. If a case comes before it in the new context of a Congressional declaration, the Court might find an excuse to reverse itself—especially if, by then, a couple of President Reagan's appointees are on the bench. But if the Court did reverse itself on such a flimsy pretext, it would degrade itself as an institution. And if Congress tries to bypass a constitutional amendment by adopting the Galebach-Helms-Hyde proposal, it will similarly degrade itself.

PROCREATIONISM

With all the talk about Creationists, little has been said about an offshoot sect known as the Procreationists. Procreationists agree with the Creationists that God created Adam and Eve, but go on to say that Adam and Eve procreated the entire human race. Or, in the words of Procreationist leader the Rev. Billy Drano, "The human race started at the moment of conception, you might say; obviously, sex is God's will, with one purpose—procreation."

The Reverend Drano regards right-to-lifers as "too liberal, because they don't get to the root of the problem, which is sex itself." Of the high incidence of teen-age pregnancies the Reverend Drano says, "If those girls hadn't been able to buy contraceptives at their corner drugstores, they wouldn't have got pregnant."

The Reverend Drano also blames sex education courses that teach a "secular, scientific" theory of procreation for current moral laxity. The Procreationists will file suits in several states demanding that "alternative courses" in Procreationism be taught, centering around the belief that babies are brought by the stork. "If today's children were as ignorant about sex as their grandparents were," the Rev. Billy Drano says, "there wouldn't be all this promiscuity."

Caveat Downplay

Is the revolution in El Salvador a Communist knife aimed at our vitals, as Haig and Reagan have been shouting from the housetops for weeks? Or is it just a "story running about five times as big as it really is," as a temporarily anonymous "senior State Department official" said it was on March 12?

Both signals came out of Washington in the span of a few days. The press, dutifully and foolishly obeying the "ground rules" of a "backgrounder," went along with this contradictory propaganda until Secretary Haig himself pinned the "downplay" on the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, John Bushnell. The Secretary of State semi-discounted this bit of disinformation on March 13, and on March 16 the President's press secretary said of Bushnell's initiative, "I think he was speaking for himself."

So we are back with a full-scale World Communist Crisis in El Salvador after a brief boggling bobble. In Haigspeak, let us "caveat" that.

Say It Ain't So, Walter

If the press is "the weak slat under the bed of democracy," as A. J. Liebling once wrote, broadcast journalism may be its sprung frame. This stricture is prompted by the news that Walter Cronkite will join the board of directors of Pan American Airways while remaining as a "special correspondent" of CBS News.

Cronkite, my old colleague (see note below), and CBS News claim that this corporate connection will not sully his journalistic objectivity. The "most trusted man in America," according to the polls, declares that "I'd rule myself out" of any story "that involves the air transportation business." CBS News declares that its ability to control Cronkite's assignments will prevent any contamination from the universe of business.

Nonsense, I say. By joining the board of any corporation a practicing journalist becomes involved in a great number of policy questions affecting the political economy of this country. A short list of such connections would include taxation, regulation and labor relations. And how could a

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director act responsibly in that capacity without applying his special knowledge to the welfare of his company? In Cronkite's case, the specialty would have to include "image" and politics.

In the case of Pan Am, the areas of public policy conflicts should be broadened to include antitrust and mergers, international airline competition and access to terminals abroad, government policies affecting aircraft production, space exploration (a famous Cronkite specialty) and defense contracts.

What does that far from exhaustive list leave for Cronkite's unbiased presentation "the way it is"? Politics is out, by definition. Gene-splicing perhaps? But government-subsidized research is involved in that field. Sports? But what if Pan Am has a contract to fly the Yankees? And so on through a minefield of potential conflicts.

Before drawing my conclusions from all this, I should say that I am sure that Cronkite is not doing this for money or power. He needs neither and anyway would not do it for those reasons. Rather, he seems to have a kind of innocence about the realities of the American system. He is genuinely interested in "flight and the airlines," as he has said, and he has a "fondness for Pan Am in particular."

Straightforward as that is, it is not professional. I, among others, had hopes that broadcast journalism would develop strict standards that would separate the "news business" from "business." In Cronkite's long career he helped to clarify the line between the two, which even Edward R. Murrow, of properly hallowed memory, had blurred when he was both a broadcaster and a director of CBS Inc.

It was surely an illusion to think the separation could ever be that clear. This is the real world, and Walter Cronkite is of course in it.

BLAIR CLARK

Blair Clark, a contributing editor of The Nation, *worked for CBS News for twelve years as a correspondent and for three years in the early 1960s as general manager and vice president.*

HEADLINE HISTORY

In case you have been away, the news out of Washington has been grim. Here is a compendium of recent headlines in The New York Times *that, unfortunately, speak for themselves.*

"Weinberger Begins Drive for Big Rise in Military Budget"

"Huge Rise in Military Budget Is Urged"

"Budget Placing Military Above Domestic Needs"

"Bell Says Administration Seeks Greater Cuts in Aid to Education"

"Latest Budget Cuts to Fall Heavily on Farmers and the Unemployed"

"Economists Find Reagan Proposal for Cutting Taxes Favors Wealthy"

"Bias to Sun Belt Seen in Reagan Budget"

"Summit Delay During Military Buildup Is Part of Reagan Strategy"

"Grant Applications by U.S. Cities Frozen"

"Intelligence Groups Seek Power to Gain Data on U.S. Citizens"

"Controversial Clinch River Reactor Plan Is Poised to Proceed"

"Ex-Nuclear Chairman* Whom Carter Ousted Is Named Acting Head"

"Reagan Hinting at Arms for Afghan Rebels"

"Bell Seeks Reduced Role on Bias Laws"

"Miners Protest Planned Reduction in U.S. Aid to Black Lung Program"

"U.S. Said to Prepare Major Weapons Aid to Mideast Nations"

"E.P.A. Plans to Ease Rules on Clear Air, Vice President Says"

"Autonomy Plan for Palestinians Is Fading Away"

"An Ohio Family's Struggle to Survive Is Clouded by Plan to Cut Food Stamps"

"U.S. Bars Treaty for Now on Use of Sea Resources"

"Reagan Is Moving to End Program That Pays for Legal Aid to the Poor"

"Reagan Defends New Arms Help for Salvadorans"

"U.S. Decides to Sell Equipment to Saudis to Bolster F-15 Jets"

"Less Emphasis Is Seen on Seeking Women and Blacks For Seats on U.S. District Courts"

"U.S. Said to Weigh Extensive Arms Sales to Pakistan"

"Sharp Cutback in U.S. Employees in Regional Centers Contemplated"

"Safeguards on Resources Are Not Priority for [James] Watt"

Postscript. *In fairness, we should note that some of these headlines—precious few—have been qualified by later retractions. For example: "President Opposes Domestic C.I.A. Role" and "President Doubtful on U.S. Intervention" (in El Salvador). March 13 alarums over an imminent Soviet invasion of Poland became March 17's "U.S. Now Voices Reduced Concern That Russians May Invade Poland." When this Administration says one thing one day and reverses itself a few days later, it must be considered a blessing, since the first announcement invariably was bad.*

* Joseph M. Hendrie, who was dismissed as chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission amid criticism of its handling of the nuclear plant accident at Three Mile Island.

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CENTRAL AMERICA WATCH.

The final results of State Department representative Lawrence Eagleburger's European tour in February remain to be tallied, but it appears they were decidedly mixed. The reception was extremely chilly in Sweden and Belgium, where officials scoffed at Eagleburger's "proof" of Soviet, Cuban and Nicaraguan procurement of arms for the Salvadoran opposition.

In West Germany, the Reagan policy has come under stinging criticism, primarily from a group within the Social Democratic Party led by Willy Brandt. This, however, could change. The Germans regard East-West détente as their primary foreign policy concern, and with the SALT talks and hope for a high-level summit meeting between the United States and the Soviet Union stymied, there is a chance that the Social Democrats could soften their hitherto vocal support for El Salvador's opposition Revolutionary Democratic Front in return for some concessions on the arms-talk issue.

In France, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's Government has been predictably receptive to Ronald Reagan's general policy line, although even there Eagleburger alienated many by insisting that the European Common Market cut off emergency aid to refugees on the ground that some of the grains and powdered milk might find their way to the guerrillas. "The questioning of humanitarian aid, no matter what the circumstances," noted Raymond Aron of *L'Express*, "normally evokes an immediate negative response."

Ironically, one of the Reagan Administration's staunchest allies may turn out to be the Vatican. On March 2, Canadian Minister of External Affairs Mark MacGuigan complained, "The Canadian churches tell us one thing; the Vatican specifically repudiates what the Canadian Catholic Church tells us." Further investigation on the part of Canadian Catholic groups revealed that the papal nuncio in Ottawa had instructed MacGuigan to disregard the positions of the Canadian and U.S. Catholic Churches, both of which have taken strong stands against U.S. military intervention in El Salvador.

Meanwhile, acting Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas of San Salvador has been putting into practice his March 15 homily in which he called upon the Salvadoran people to look to the junta instead of the opposition for leadership, and to pin their hopes on the elections that will supposedly be held next year. (This same package is being peddled in Western Europe, along with remnants of the "Zimbabwe Option," which calls for a rapprochement between the feuding Social Democrats led by Guillermo Ungo and the wing of the Christian Democrats under José Napoleón Duarte. The trouble with this plan is that it ignores the Salvadoran military, the oligarchy, the paramilitary groups, the popular organizations and the guerrilla factions.)

Many Salvadorans believe that Rivera y Damas stepped into Archbishop Oscar Romero's shoes without being able to fill them; he has vacillated continually over the past year. The political figure he has been closest to is Col. Adolfo Arnaldo Majano, a leader among the liberal "military youth" who initiated the original October 1979 coup. Rivera y Damas's apparent unwillingness to carry on Romero's denunciation of the regime can be explained in part by the expulsion of Majano from the junta in early December 1980. Majano is now under arrest awaiting military trial on undetermined charges. Whereas Archbishop Romero was viewed as a former conservative who was radicalized by events, Rivera y Damas has been the opposite: a one-time outspoken defender of human rights, he has gradually worked his way into a neutral position, whether because of Church politics or fear for his life, one cannot say. Certainly he does not seem to be the same man who said on November 10, 1980:

> I believe that the principal actions of violence against the Church have come from the security forces and the right. I don't exclude the fact that some have come from the left, but they are the exception. . . . Now, our attitude is not only to defend the Church but to denounce in general all that is contrary to justice, violations of human rights, because we consider that this is the Evangel and that this is the mission of the Church. If we were only worried about the Church, perhaps we would have remained silent.

■ **A former minister in the Salvadoran Government warned *The Nation* more than a month ago that El Salvador's landowning families are sabotaging José Napoleón Duarte's proclaimed land reform programs. Carlos Federico Paredes, who arrived in the United States on March 19, resigned as Vice Minister of Economic Planning on January 25 in protest against the inordinate influence the wealthy landowning families continue to exercise over Government economic policies through the security forces. Although the leading families pay lip service to land reform, their own lucrative coffee plantations remain intact.**

The families, Paredes charges, were behind the "disappearance" and presumed death of René Machón, head of the Government's Coffee Institute, whose determination to nationalize the industry angered wealthy coffee plantation owners. Machón was last seen in the custody of National Guardsmen, Paredes says; he was replaced by Miguel Angel Salórzano, an employee for twenty-five years of the De Sola family, who are major coffee growers. When Machón's family sought a meeting with Col. Vides Casanova, head of the National Guard, to inquire about him, Casanova refused to see them. As it happens, two years ago Casanova married coffee heiress Lourdes Llach.

Paredes says that Machón is not the only Government official who has been "disappeared." Others include Melvin Orellana, another Christian Democrat who was investigating corruption and price fixing in the Public Housing Authority; Mario Zamora, a Christian Democrat who served as ombudsman for the poor, and a number of Christian Democrat mayors, all of whom have been killed by security forces and death squads. Paredes doubts that the Christian Democratic Government can carry out its promised reforms so long as the military remains in control and serves the landowners' interests.

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ARTICLES.

THE CARTER URBAN REPORT

A Nation of Immigrants to The Sun Belt

THOMAS BENDER

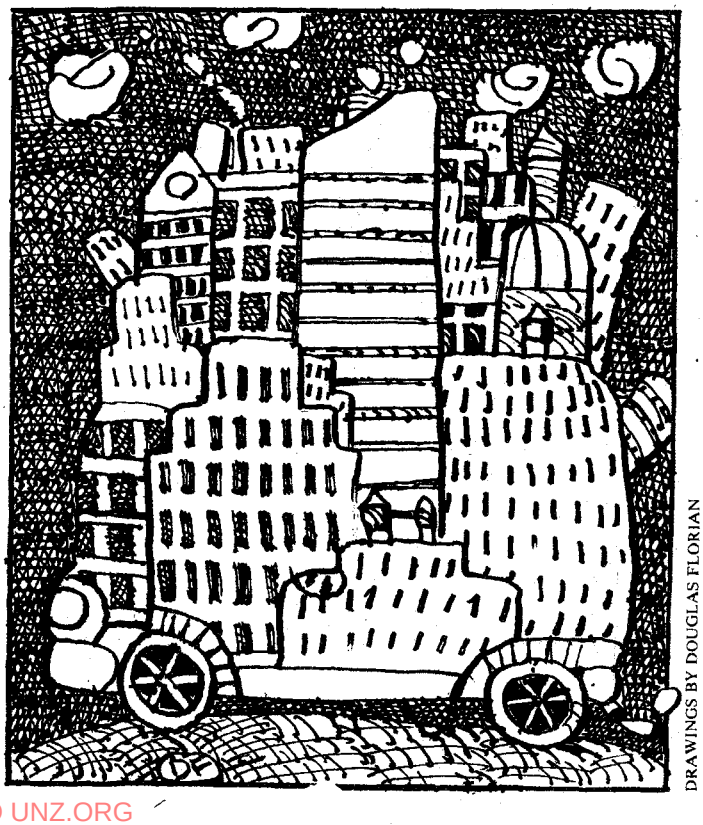
Even before it was presented to President Carter in January, the urban report of the President's Commission for a National Agenda for the Eighties had stimulated more hostile comment than any report on cities in recent years. Most of the criticism of *Urban America in the Eighties* has been predictable, and doubtless it was anticipated by the authors of the report. Politicians from the nation's Eastern and Midwestern cities (the "old cities") saw the recommendation that the Government assist people to migrate to jobs in "newer" Sun Belt cities in terms of sectional conflict and as a threat to the already eroding demographic base of their political significance. This pattern of response, ranging from Mayor Edward Koch's "unprintable" to more reasoned critiques, remains important, but it requires no further discussion here except to remark that big-city politicians reacted only to this point, ignoring the panel's proposal—which they presumably support—for the nationalization of welfare and the establishment of a Federally guaranteed income. What deserves more comment than it has received is what I will call the intellectual style of the report and its semi-articulated vision of a reformed urban America.

The report is not one of the highest products of the human intellect. It is a mixture of cliché, banality and excited, almost sophomoric, enthusiasm for revisionism. If the bibliography may be taken as a guide to its intellectual foundations, one cannot help being struck by the narrowness of perspective. Perhaps three-quarters of the references derive from the discipline of economic geography or regional economic analysis. And humanistic urban scholarship is conspicuous by its absence. Why, for example, rely on a *Scientific American* article by the omnicompetent economist Eli Ginzberg, rather than the brilliant, humanistic scholarship of anthropologist Carol Stack, for insight into the human texture and constraints of ghetto life? Or, for another example, why does a report that is primarily intent upon providing the American public with a lesson in urban history (e.g., rise and fall, transformation in time), fail to cite any serious scholarship by urban historians? Only two works of urban history are noted, and they are perhaps the two most elementary introductory textbooks in the field.

Most striking of all is the relentlessly deterministic quality of this social analysis. Again and again, we are told to recognize social and economic forces that are "potent and enduring," trends that are "persistent and immutable" and the "long-term inevitability and desirability of this transformation." Such language amounts to a prescription for political quietism.

The report is rife with actions without actors. Even casual acquaintance with recent historical writing would have enabled the panelists to overcome such vulgar determinism. Both Marxist historians like David F. Noble and non-Marxist nonradicals like Alfred Chandler have shown that the techno-economic structure of America is the product of conscious strategy and decisions in an environment of unequally distributed power. Trends do not simply happen. They are not autonomous and outside of history. They are, to use Chandler's phrase, the result of actions by a "visible hand." Some attention to the argument and data in *The North Will Rise Again*, by Jeremy Rifkin and Randy Barber, might have provided some hints to the panelists as to what hands are shaping the immutable trends we are asked to accept as providential facts.

The leitmotif of the report is an idea popularized but never adequately documented by Daniel Bell, a member of the President's commission, though not on the urban panel. Taking Bell's notion of a post-industrial society—a society



DRAWINGS BY DOUGLAS FLORIAN

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where economic activity is oriented to the provision of services and knowledge—as their starting point, the authors of the report define and prescribe a post-city urban future. Admittedly, this notion is at first glance confusing. But for the panelists, urban and city have quite distinct meanings. *Urban*, as they use it, has no spatial referent; it is akin to what sociologists in the 1950s called "mass society," except with more positive connotations. *City*, by contrast, rather consistently refers to compact settlements whose basic form is a legacy of the period between the Civil War and World War I (Eastern and Midwestern cities). Newer municipalities and suburbs, with their sprawl (praised in the report as energy-efficient, low-density settlement!), qualify as urban; older cities, however, are urban anomalies on the verge of becoming historical vestiges, "social and physical evidence of past collective choices."

Since America's first confrontation with the city in the 1820s, there have been generations of a particular type of urban reformer apparently unable to understand either urbanity or humanity. Disturbed by the "corruption" of city politics, the crush of city density, the clamor of city diversity and other characteristic city phenomena, these reformers never grasped the positive appeal of city living, those qualities of city life that encourage people to forge attachments to particular cities.

This tradition of reformers has been memorialized in the oft-repeated though perhaps apocryphal story of a mid-nineteenth-century urban reformer who noticed during one of his tours through the slums of New York City a poor Irishwoman who, with his aid, had the previous year been transported to a small, Western town. To his solicitous inquiry, she responds: "I would rather starve in the city than eat in the country." Was her attitude so unreasonable as the reformer thought it was? Is it irrational or otherwise unacceptable to value familiar places, friends, relatives? Is it unambiguously misplaced loyalty to remain—at the cost of personal mobility—a part of the social networks formed in ghettos as strategies of survival? Need one sacrifice one's citizenship, which is to say one's right, to the active concern of the government for one's welfare, if these place-oriented values are embraced?

By completely dissociating urbanism and living from place, the report does not even recognize the possibility of such commitments. Rather, it posits a far different set of values as the basis of urban policy. People should be as mobile as capital, it says. One of Marx's most chilling indictments of capitalism is here casually prescribed as the good life. The critical problem facing America during its transition to post-industrial society, according to the report, is that capital and jobs are more mobile than people. The fundamental recommendation of the report is that the government intervene to make people as mobile as capital and commodities. With such perfect mobility, space ceases to be a factor in history, and place loses its significance in the organization of individual and group lives. All of this is encapsulated in a slogan about aiding people rather than places. No doubt the rhetorical intention is to convey human concern; in fact, the slogan masks the intention to reduce people to the role of movable commodities in a national capital and labor market.

Even if we were to accept this devaluation of men and women, questions remain. Are there in fact so many job opportunities on the Sun Belt frontier? Is there a New Jerusalem awaiting, ready to welcome hordes of city folk? We all know that poverty, inadequate schools, crime and other social ills plague Sun Belt cities. Indeed, the report itself asserts, in contradiction of its major theme, that while fiscal problems afflict Northern cities, "social needs have been most severe in Southern cities, regardless of size." This conflict between fact and ideological aspiration—and the suppression of the fact—is interesting in part because it represents a contemporary manifestation of an old American tradition. The myth of the frontier, of the Edenic West, has historically served Americans, as Henry Nash Smith pointed out years ago, as an emotionally appealing misrepresentation of reality that has allowed us to avert our eyes from fundamental problems of our society and of our cities in particular.

Who is likely to migrate to the Sun Belt? Who is most likely to profit from the opportunities presented by the post-industrial service economy of urban America? The opportunities for real advancement in the post-industrial society described by Bell turn out to belong to a rather small group of highly educated, mostly male, mostly white Americans. It offers very little prospect of substantial economic improvement to the masses of unemployed and underemployed of the cities. The great bulk of jobs being created are very low-paying and offer small prospect of advancement. Emma Rothschild pointed out, in *The New York Review of Books* of February 5, that while most new jobs created in the American economy have indeed been in the service and retail sector (70 percent of all new private jobs created between 1973 and 1980), they have been concentrated in three subcategories: "eating and drinking places," "health services" and "business services." And these jobs, she notes, are overwhelmingly low-paying and dead-end. Those who put frozen hamburgers into electric ovens, look after the elderly and sweep the floors of corporate offices are not on the royal road to economic success.

The panel does, alas, recognize some problems with its Edenic vision. Not everyone will make it there. Most of the poor will be left behind in the cities (as they have already been left behind by those who departed for the suburbs). The city has changed, the panelists inform us. It is no longer a special locale for upward mobility and assimilation. By my reading, the panel considers the city today as a collecting pond for society's failures. To address this unfortunate circumstance, they recommend that cities, which do after all have existing "public service package" infrastructures, undertake a "selected disinvestment of some services" and prepare themselves to serve as custodial reservations for the poor. But the panelists are not, they would have us believe, lacking in genuine social concern: "The dominant trend toward low-density development should be harnessed in such a way that those whose fortunes improve by moving

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out, regardless of their new locations, are not allowed to abandon their responsibilities to those who are left behind [hence nationalization of funding for welfare]. . . . Public actions should assist those who have been left behind to adjust to the consequences of the departure of others." What we have here is the nationalization of the suburbanization process: the spatial differentiation of class and race is to work itself out, with continued governmental assistance, on a national, rather than merely a metropolitan, scale.

But the cities are not to be given over entirely to the residual poor. Within the city there will be other space reserved as cultural center. The panel proposes that "the cores of our central cities should be revitalized as culturally rich, architecturally exciting magnets for conventions, tourism and leisure time pursuits of regional, national, and even international populations." The socioeconomic characteristics of these populations can, I trust, be easily surmised. The city, it seems, is to be taken away from most of its residents who, it is hoped, will somehow go away—or at least be out of the way.

The worst part of this proposal is that it does not reflect alone the minds of Houston and Dallas, the places of residence, respectively, of the panel chairman and the panel's senior staffer. The quoted language above is taken by the authors of the report from John Kasarda, a University of Chicago sociologist; the same vision of the city has been embodied in the recent Twentieth Century Fund report on *The Future of New York City*, except that the latter formulation adds a resident financial elite to the mix. And almost all of the themes in the report should be familiar to readers of Roger Starr's editorials in *The New York Times*. Indeed, when the recommendations of the panel became public, Starr wrote an editorial urging New Yorkers respectfully to consider, if not actually to embrace, the report. Provincial hostility to the city—and to New York in particular—extends back to the founding of the nation. But now the Trojan horse has entered the city. Are we to welcome it? □

THEY'RE *OUR* S.O.B.S

The Kirkpatrick Doctrine for Latin America

PENNY LERNOUX

Whatever may be said of President Ronald Reagan's State Department appointees, it must be allowed that they don't let facts get in their way. Typical of the instant expertise that passes for knowledge these days are the uninformed opinions of Jeane Kirkpatrick, Reagan's Ambassador to the United Nations and a self-appointed apologist for Latin American dictators.

According to Kirkpatrick's articles in *Commentary* [see Alan Wolfe, "Jeane's Designs," *The Nation*, February 7], the Carter Administration so jeopardized the United States' strategic defense lines that the country is about to be surrounded by "a ring of Soviet bases" in the Caribbean and Central America. Supposed beachheads include Grenada, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guyana (the inclusion of the latter will be news to many Guyanese who think Forbes Burnham's dictatorship follows the Duvalier family tradition in Haiti). Kirkpatrick claims that the Red Menace was reincarnated by Washington's "disinterested international spirit," which rejected "the moral legitimacy" of force. The Carter Administration opted to "fight for human rights with socialism." The "socialists" in the Carter government did not limit their definition of human rights to personal and legal ones, claims Kirkpatrick, but pursued "a much broader conception which included the political 'rights' available only in democracies and the economic 'rights' promised by socialism." This "distortion" blinded the U.S. Government to Latin America's intrinsic social and political backwardness and the consequent need for strong military regimes. Those who challenge the status quo are either corrupt (i.e., the Catholic Church) or Castroite terrorists, in her opinion. Ergo, the failure to support military dictatorships because of their human-rights violations played into the hands of Soviet stooges.

While there may have been much to criticize in Carter's human-rights policies, the former Georgetown professor fails to detect the sophisticated direction behind them. In contrast to Kirkpatrick, who does not appear to have spent much time on the scene, U.S. bankers and businessmen in Latin America are aware that there are other, more subtle and enduring forms of capitalist government than old-fashioned dictatorships, which historically have proved unstable. Torture and murder are bad for business, and the level of corruption—and size of bribes demanded of U.S. companies—increases proportionately the cost of doing business with every year of dictatorship. The Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua used to hold the record for corruption in Latin America; since its demise, the torch has passed to Paraguay's Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, the longest-reigning dictator in the hemisphere. Haiti is runner-up, but Guyana, Brazil and Chile also are setting records.

Studies by "respectable" think tanks, including the RAND Corporation, show that repressive military regimes are an invitation to revolution in Latin America because all the normal channels for dissent are closed, and sooner or later the mounting pressures explode. That also is the theory of Latin America's Communist parties, which believe that military dictatorship goads the populace to insurrection. Contrary to Kirkpatrick's claim that military governments are necessary in a "backward" region, Latin America is underdeveloped primarily because the majority of the people have been repeatedly and forcibly prevented by the

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military from participating in the choice of government.

Though poorly executed, Carter's human-rights policies were intended to inch totalitarian regimes toward a more pluralistic society that could co-opt revolutionary forces. Such has been the experience of Colombia and Venezuela, where formal democracies have checkmated the growth of guerrilla movements, which are so divided on philosophy and tactics that their impact is about the same as a gnat on an elephant. In listing Carter's giveaways, Kirkpatrick dwells on the Panama Canal treaties, conveniently ignoring that the principal lobby for the treaties represented a *Who's Who* of American banks and corporations and that treaty negotiations were begun when Henry Kissinger was Secretary of State. These Republicans supported the treaties because they knew their financial and commercial stakes in Panama were far more valuable than an outdated canal. Subsequent developments have supported their confidence in Panama's formal democracy: At a time when the rest of Central America is seething, American influence in Panama is stronger than ever. Anti-U.S. demonstrations are a thing of the past, and U.S. companies and banks report that business is booming.

As human-rights lobbyists can attest, Kirkpatrick's description of Carter's definition of human rights is completely erroneous. The principal criticism that could be made against that definition was precisely its lack of a broader concept to include economic and political rights. Kirkpatrick's definition of what she considers the proper sphere of human rights—purely personal and legal ones (proscribing torture, arbitrary imprisonment and arrest)—was Carter's very own. Or perhaps she has forgotten Carter's threats to veto "any act of Congress" that restricted U.S. bank loans to dictatorships "under any circumstances," human-rights violations included.

Expanding her conspiracy theories, Kirkpatrick attempts to blame human rights for the growing competition for Latin American business from the Europeans and the Japanese although most European governments took a stronger line on human-rights violations than did the Carter Administration. That their companies were able to underbid or outsell U.S. competitors was due to specific market conditions, including a better product and price, and had nothing to do with whether their governments disapproved of torture. As U.S. and European corporate spokesmen candidly admit, human rights are the last consideration in a business deal.

Kirkpatrick is equally misinformed when she deals with individual governments in Central America. Thus, Panama is described as a "gross violator of human rights," yet the country is conspicuously absent from Amnesty International's list of violators. She also claims that the Somoza regime "featured limited repression and limited oppression," even though more than 30,000 people died fighting the dynasty in the four decades preceding the civil war. Similarly, the Somozas "enjoyed no monopoly of economic power," when in fact they owned more than five million acres of Nicaragua's land (an area approximately the size of El Salvador) as well as the country's twenty-six biggest companies. As to the regime's "moderate corruption," foreign and local businessmen regularly complained that it was impossible to get a government contract or license—or to conduct any phase of business—without payoffs to the Somoza family.

Perhaps the most enlightening observation by Kirkpatrick is that the Carter Administration "brought down the Somoza regime"—enlightening because it illustrates just how far removed from the Latin American reality she and the Reagan Administration are. Had there been any chance of saving Somoza, Carter would have seized it. (Even as the bitter end approached, Carter was writing Somoza to congratulate him on his Government's improved record on human rights.) But when an entire nation is in revolt against a tyrant—including businessmen, right-wing politicians and a conservative Catholic hierarchy—not even the Marines could save him, not at least in 1979. Kirkpatrick blithely ignores the profound changes in the social dynamics of Latin America in the past three decades, thus failing to grasp that the United States can no longer unilaterally impose its will (any more than it could in Vietnam). Carter "lost" Nicaragua because he and his predecessors did not understand that so long as they supported a tyrant, the outcome could be settled only by military force, and that force was led by the Sandinist insurrectionists and supported by their allies in Latin America, including oil-rich Venezuela, which was prepared to intervene militarily on the side of the Sandinists.

The same perspective informs Kirkpatrick's litany of complaints against the Sandinist Government. She would have us believe that the revolutionary Government has wiped out the private sector (actually the latter still controls 70 percent of the economy), and that the Sandinist directorate are Soviet puppets because they have close ties with the Palestinians and condemn the governments of South Africa and Chile. Like any country recently in the throes of a revolution, Nicaragua is experiencing the pressures of a society seeking new directions, with all the internal struggles that such a process imposes. But to accuse the Nicaraguan Government of being the Russians' tool merely because some of its members visited Russia is as silly as saying that Reagan is a Communist because he is considering a summit

FORUM ON EL SALVADOR

The External and Internal Dynamics of the Conflict. Present U.S. Policy. Future Policy Options. The Implications for Central America.

Sponsored by the Fund for New Priorities, New School for Social Research, North American Congress on Latin America and the Nation Institute. Keynote speaker: Carlos Fuentes. Tuesday, April 14, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. Place: New School Auditorium, 66 W. 12th Street, New York City.

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meeting with President Brezhnev. Whatever the outcome of the revolutionary process—and whatever Kirkpatrick might wish—it is a Nicaraguan affair. In an interview with *The Times* of London, Arturo Cruz, one of two private-sector representatives on the Nicaraguan junta, pointedly warned the Reagan Administration that "if any government decides to interfere in the affairs of my country, and if it decides to attack this country, be it by economic aggression or armed aggression, I can assure you that my country would come first. This is the way 99 percent of the people feel."

The ignorance displayed by Kirkpatrick and her boss, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, already has set Latin American governments on edge. Kirkpatrick's slurs on the region's political and social corruption and backwardness have been widely publicized and adversely commented on in the local press. Haig made matters worse by ordering the U.S. Ambassador to Panama, Ambler Moss, to deliver a dressing-down about Panama's friendly relations with Cuba to President Aristides Royo and Gen. Omar Torrijos, head of the National Guard. The scold was repeated in numerous newspapers by the Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez, a friend of Torrijos. As usual, Reagan's men got their facts wrong, claiming that Panama was harboring a Cuban fleet when actually there were only two fishing boats, and accusing the Government of allowing Cuba to use Panamanian territory to send arms and guerrillas to El Salvador. The incensed Royo sent a blistering reply, noting that "no Latin American country has used Panama to send troops or arms to El Salvador. The only country that uses our territory against our will to interfere in El Salvador is the United States." But Torrijos had the last word: "This message," he wrote the U.S. Ambassador, "has come to the wrong address. It should have been sent to Puerto Rico."

U.S misinformation may annoy the Panamanians, but in El Salvador it serves as cover for the ongoing massacre of thousands of people, including three American nuns and a lay religious worker. Kirkpatrick's adept double talk gives the impression that Communists were responsible for the nuns' killings—something not even the junta has claimed. She also takes the Carter-Reagan line that the Salvadoran junta is caught in a crossfire between right and left. Typically, all evidence casting doubt on this line is rejected out of hand or, when too politically sensitive, covered up. The latter explains Washington's indifference to stonewalling by the Salvadoran Government in the investigation of the nuns' murders.

A Presidential team sent by Carter to El Salvador found nothing to implicate the high military command in the killings, but a team of F. B. I. investigators, which apparently did not get the word that Washington wanted to "delink" the murders from aid to the military, found further incriminating evidence, subsequently leaked to the press, including fingerprints on the nuns' microbus that could well belong to some of the twenty policemen known to have been in the vicinity at the time of the murders. Autopsies performed in the United States on two of the nuns' bodies showed that they were killed by bullets from high-powered rifles of the type regularly used by security forces. "It seems quite clear that my sister was killed by Salvadoran Government forces," said William Ford, brother of the slain Maryknoll nun Ita Ford.

Contrary to State Department claims that it is on top of the investigation, relatives of the murdered women complained that department officials did not even answer their telephone calls. The Overseas Press Club of America lodged a similar complaint against the department's "cavalier" attitude toward the disappearance of John Sullivan, a U.S. journalist on assignment in El Salvador. Sullivan's family was told that the case did not enjoy "priority status" and that in effect Americans abroad cannot expect protection from their government.

The Reagan Administration doesn't want to hear about such nuisance cases because they interfere with Haig's plan to convince European and Latin American governments that Cuba, Russia and Vietnam are arming and aiding Salvadoran insurgents. Again, the problem with the script is that it lacks proof to convince any but the naïve or misinformed. If one believes the story, Salvadoran guerrillas are using American arms abandoned by U.S. forces in Vietnam, although it is not explained why the guerrillas should go to so much trouble and expense to obtain arms from faraway Asia when they can get the same or better goods on the black market in neighboring Costa Rica. Sweden's Pierre Schori, director of international affairs for the Socialist International, dismisses the Haig story as "an insult to the intelligence" of Americans and Europeans. Similar, if more diplomatic, opinions have been expressed in Bonn, Paris, Brussels and The Hague, in response to a State Department mission that claimed to have definitive proof of Soviet military aid that turned out to be nothing more than still-to-be-authenticated documents of plans for such aid. [See

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James Petras's cover article and *Central America Watch* on page 358 of this issue.]

The real dupes are in the United States. Says Sister Alicia Ramírez, a Loretto nun who works in Central America: "Americans need to know that U.S. money is being used . . . to kill and oppress people [in El Salvador]. People need to know that their tax money is going to kill U.S. nuns." But Americans are *not* told. A recent study by Columbia University's School of Journalism revealed that opponents of the Salvadoran junta were consistently characterized in the U.S. media as the "extreme left" and that the broad opposition Revolutionary Democratic Front was scarcely mentioned. The study also reported that eight out of ten quotes in the stories it reviewed came either from U.S. or Salvadoran Government sources. To add to the misinformation, a film on Central America called "Attack on the Americas," produced by the right-wing American Security Council, is making the rounds of local television stations [see David L. Aasen. "Coming Distractions," *The Nation*, February 28]. Its stars: Reagan, Kissinger and Kirkpatrick. □

PLAYING MONOPOLY AGAIN

The New War on Antitrust Laws

PETER H. STONE

Two specters are haunting American capitalism: foreign competition and declining productivity. From the Chamber of Commerce, the Chase Manhattan Bank and the Business Roundtable there is a growing stream of literature and lobbying warning about the threat to the U.S. economy and the national security itself posed by the rise in foreign imports, especially Japanese automobiles. At the same time, the word is going out that America must take some drastic actions to boost its exports and redress the balance of trade if it wants to keep its place as top dog in the world economy.

What is striking about the new business consciousness is the way it mingles the reality of a major change in the U.S. economy with an exaggerated sense of impending crisis. There is a concerted effort under way by many elements of the business community to use the fear of foreign competition as a wedge for seeking cutbacks in government regulations. This ideological campaign is now being broadened to include the need for changes in U.S. antitrust laws, ostensibly so that American companies can be more competitive with their foreign rivals, who, the argument goes, don't have the same kinds of restrictions as U.S. businessmen do. In short, the business community is reviving the idea that big is beautiful, and offering two cheers for monopoly.

The recent responses by Congress, the courts, the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission have been, in varying degrees, sympathetic to the campaign against antitrust laws. There is, for example, legislation before Congress to allow U.S. banks and corporations exemptions from certain antitrust laws so that they can form export trading companies, which, they claim, will enable them to boost American exports. This bill, the Export Trading Company Act of 1981, actually passed the Senate last year by a 77-to-0 vote, but had not been acted on by the House when Congress adjourned. It was reintroduced on January 19 in the Senate (hearings were held in mid-February and the bill was approved by the Senate committee; it will go to the full Senate in early April).

Recent actions by the F.T.C. and several court decisions suggest a growing acceptance of the idea that antitrust laws inhibit innovation at a time when it is critical for U.S. competitiveness with foreign business. There has always been a fine line between innovation and monopoly in antitrust cases, and the balance now seems to be tipping toward favoring innovation "even if monopoly results," in the words of an F.T.C. decision in a case involving E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company last fall. Also last fall, the Justice Department issued new guidelines for business, detailing ways in which firms might share basic research to spur innovation without violating antitrust statutes. Finally, the Reagan Administration chose Stanford law professor William Baxter to head the antitrust division of the Justice Department. Baxter has said that he thinks the Justice Department guidelines that bar mergers of competing firms with a market share of 5 percent or more may be too tough. He also testified before Congress against legislation that would have curbed acquisitions by oil companies of unrelated businesses, and he opposed increasing antitrust strictures against conglomerate mergers.

The major rationale advanced by those seeking to gut antitrust legislation is that the world economy has undergone a radical transformation since the late 1890s when the first Sherman Antitrust Act was passed. Competition is no longer served, they say, by limiting the size of American firms that must deal with overseas rivals who are helped by government subsidies and operate without the kinds of rules that fetter U.S. business. Lester Thurow states this argu-

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COMING UP IN THE NATION

"Open Letter to Saudi Arabia"

By "Hayyan ibn Bayyan"

Also: John Emshwiller on Big Nuke's troubles; Charles Piller on "experiments" on workers; Alfred J. Watkins on the reindustrialization blueprint for social change.

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ment succinctly in his book *The Zero-Sum Society*:

> The futility and obsolescence of the antitrust laws can be seen from a number of vantage points. First, with the growth of international trade it is no longer possible to determine whether an effective monopoly exists, by looking at local market shares. Regardless of the share of domestic production held by General Motors, General Motors is part of a competitive industry and must deal with strong Japanese and European competitors. In markets where international trade exists or could exist, national antitrust laws no longer make sense. If they do anything, they only serve to hinder U.S. competitors who must live by a code that their foreign competitors can ignore.

The Chamber of Commerce is probably the leading group in the business community fighting antitrust laws. The chamber lobbied for the export trading companies bill, because, according to Fred Byset, an antitrust specialist in its Washington office, there is a need for "extraterritorial relaxations that would allow joint ventures among firms that may be competitors in the U.S." "We need to find some ways, in addition, to tolerate domestic cooperation that would put our firms on a par with foreign competitors to boost productivity," Byset says.

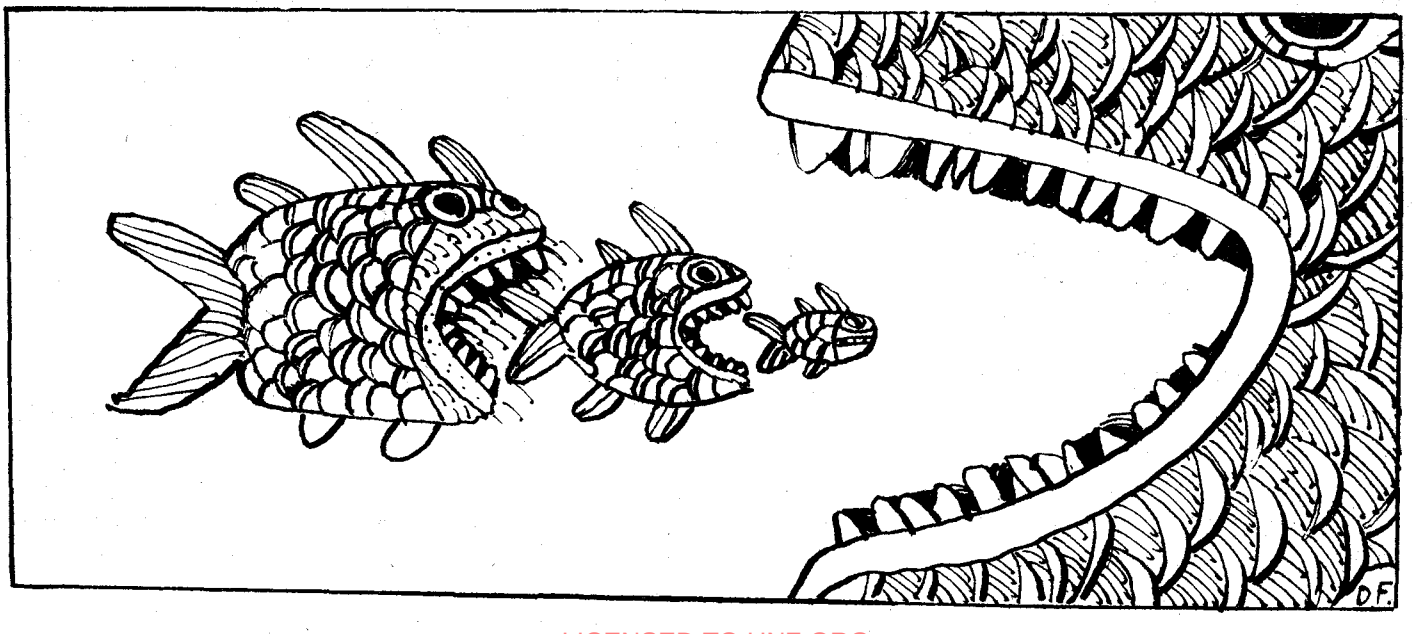
The chamber, not surprisingly, is also a strong advocate of restructuring the F.T.C., which it refers to as a "three-headed monster." Its primary objective is to take away the commission's antitrust powers and leave enforcement solely in the hands of the Justice Department, which is considered more lenient. Failing F.T.C. divestiture, the chamber would like to see new checks on its antitrust authority, including its power to initiate prosecutions.

The Business Roundtable, while not quite as active as the chamber, has come out solidly in support of the legislation to set up export trading companies, as did the Chase Manhattan Bank. The Roundtable's Task Force on International Trade and Investment prepared a statement for a House subcommittee last summer suggesting other ways to boost exports, including "ameliorating the international application of the antitrust laws, and reducing their application in foreign markets where U.S. commerce is not affected."

Meanwhile, the growth of conglomerates has been proceeding at a steadily accelerating pace in recent years, offering a sharp reminder that the country's economic wealth is becoming even more concentrated and capable of exercising political clout. In 1976, according to the F.T.C., 451 of the nation's largest corporations controlled 70 percent of the manufacturing and earned 72 percent of the country's profits. By contrast, in 1960 these same companies controlled only about 50 percent of the manufacturing and 50 percent of the profits. Another key economic indicator is that acquisitions of firms worth $500 million or more have risen from six in 1978 to sixteen in 1979, and in 1980 there were at least twelve in spite of tight money. Moreover, since 1973, the courts have been unsuccessful in twenty attempts to halt conglomerate acquisitions or mergers.

The most palpable evidence of the new anti-antitrust *Zeitgeist* is the export trading companies (E.T.C.) bill, which would amend two major antitrust provisions of long standing. First, it provides exemptions for banks from the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, passed during the Depression in an effort to limit the power of banks by barring them from commercial investment activity. Under the terms of the E.T.C. bill, banks will be allowed to invest up to 5 percent of their funds in E.T.C.s and thus play a major role in the financing and ownership of U.S. trading companies. In dollar terms the new bill will allow individual banks to invest up to $10 million without the prior approval of the Federal Reserve. Moreover, the bill would transfer some of the authority for regulating export activities from the Justice Department and the F.T.C. to the Commerce Department, where presumably the atmosphere would be one of promotion and expansion of the growth of exports, rather than surveillance and control. Perhaps more controversial, though, is the fact that the E.T.C. bill would allow banks to own a majority share of the stock in trading companies, if the Federal Reserve gave its approval.

The E.T.C. bill would also extend the antitrust exemptions of the Webb-Pomerene Act of 1918, passed at a mo-



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ment, similar to the present, when foreign competition was on the rise. Webb-Pomerene allowed U.S. companies to combine into associations for the purpose of boosting exports, and the new bill would further expand that ability. In preliminary arguments for the bill, its sponsors noted that U.S. exports fell from 19 percent to 13 percent of the world total between the years 1968 and 1977, and that with rising trade deficits, exports must be more vigorously promoted.

There was opposition to the trading companies bill from a number of sources at last year's hearings on the bill, including small independent bankers and exporters, the Federal Reserve and consumer groups worried about economic concentration. A ranking vice president of the Independent Bankers Association of America (I.B.A.A.), Robert McCormick, testified that "economic concentration seems to us to be very much on the rise in the United States. Ironically, it is moving forward under the guise of 'deregulation,' and 'increased competitive ability,' both of which have been claimed to be some of the virtues of S. 144 [the E.T.C. bill]. . . . In short, while Europe, Japan and Korea might have accomplished some very admirable achievements in the field of exports, our attempts to parallel their successes should not sacrifice economic decision making or otherwise unwisely facilitate the mounting trend toward economic concentration."

Moreover, McCormick warned that the E.T.C. bill would have dangerous implications for the safety and soundness of banking policy. "I.B.A.A. believes that the breaching of the Banking Act of 1933 will again lead the country into a commercial banking system prone to unsound, imprudent and excessively speculative investments, as was the case in the 1930s." McCormick began his testimony by agreeing that it was important to boost exports, saying that I.B.A.A. has supported a number of measures that would do that. But he also emphasized that the group "has been philosophically opposed to trends which would erode the general separation of banking activities from other forms of commerce that have been imbedded in the legal system since the passage of the Banking Act of 1933."

Some of the same charges were made by Emil Finley, president of the International Commodities Export Company. Finley, however, went further and produced some damaging statistics from an F.T.C. study in 1967 which showed little if any evidence that export trading companies have actually done what they claim. Finley's basic point was that export trading companies have generally benefited very large firms like Westinghouse or General Electric, which don't really need much help to begin with; notwithstanding its purported intentions, it has provided meager aid to small- and medium-sized firms. "The most disturbing fact about all this," Finley testified, "is that the [associations formed under the Webb-Pomerene Act] benefiting from antitrust exemptions are composed mostly of members which, taken together, also dominate our domestic scene. Their immunized actions taken with respect to export pricing and setting quotas have a direct and adverse effect on the domestic market which they are able to influence simultaneously." Finley concluded by noting that a number of members of the National Commission for the Review of Anti-Trust Laws and Procedures had recommended outright repeal of the Webb-Pomerene Act.

The trend toward a more liberal interpretation of antitrust laws is apparent in the new Justice Department guidelines for ways in which companies can share research and development projects more fully without running afoul of monopoly laws. The guidelines cite a number of cases where under particular circumstances it seems appropriate to allow more cooperation between certain companies. For example, the Justice Department emphasizes that the purer the research, and the further removed it is from the final commercial product, the more flexibility ought to be given to joint development. Similarly, the guidelines look more favorably on cooperation between smaller firms in an industry, rather than the leading competitors.

In the last few years, there have been several major court decisions that favored large companies whose innovations enabled them to gain a near monopoly. The ruling in the *Berkey* v. *Kodak* case was one such decision. Kodak controlled more than 60 percent of the market; in the years 1954 to 1973 its camera sales had never amounted to less than 64 percent of U.S. sales, and its film sales were never less than 88 percent of U.S. business. Yet the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit ruled that Kodak's overall success was due to superior performance, not monopolistic practices. In several cases, the courts have sided with the International Business Machines Corporation against its challengers. Transamerica accused I.B.M. of attempting to monopolize the markets for general computer systems, and specifically for a particular component of I.B.M. equipment. A Federal District Court judge held that Transamerica had not shown that I.B.M. had monopoly power. A few years earlier, in 1973, Telex challenged I.B.M. for allegedly using predatory pricing. In the Tenth Circuit, I.B.M. won the case and the Supreme Court refused to hear Telex's appeal. The significance of all these decisions is that they reveal a new attitude in the courts favoring innovation, even if doing so will restrict competition and give the innovating company a near monopoly.

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It is plainly no coincidence that the attacks on antitrust correspond with growing economic concentration in the United States. One Senate staff study released in early February analyzed America's top 100 corporations and found a high level of concentrated power based upon shared stock holdings and interlocking directorates. Using 1980 Securities and Exchange Commission data, the report examined companies in seventeen areas of industry and finance such as banking, autos, energy, steel, retailing and insurance. It concluded that high-level ownership of most major companies is controlled by as few as fifteen financial institutions. Leading the pack are the banks; for example, J.P. Morgan is the number one or two stockholder in twenty-five of the 100 top companies, including I.B.M., Bank of America, Eastern Airlines, Sears, General Motors, Mobil, General Electric and Westinghouse.

The failure of American business competitiveness is a legitimate issue, but the cause is not the antitrust laws or a lack of trade barriers. The real villains are American executives who have sacrificed American productivity and innovation for the sake of short-term profitability. In a nutshell, American managers have given short shrift to those factors such as worker management and quality control which have been so crucial to Japanese success, and would be much more profitable areas for development than protectionism or repeal of antitrust. "Made in the USA," says Robert Reich of the F.T.C., "has become a synonym for shoddy goods.The major argument that is being used—that U.S. companies need to get together to compete—is a fraud. The size argument does not wash. Chrysler is now bigger than Nissen. Most evidence suggests that the biggest firms are not the real innovators. . . . There is very little merger activity in Japan and West Germany." American consumers are much more confident and satisfied with the quality they receive from Japanese autos, stereos and other electronic gear than from what U.S. companies have provided. Reich believes that the blame lies with the predilection of American companies to emphasize cosmetic changes and merchanidizing at the expense of real change in products at the design level. Worker participation in decision making and profit sharing are also slighted. "These factors," in Reich's view, "dwarf antitrust and government as issues. . . . American managers are much worse with workers. They give them much less responsibility and influence and as a result there has been poorer productivity."

Reich's views are echoed by New York University law professor Eleanor Fox, who was a member of a Carter commission looking into antitrust policies. Fox believes that the business community is using foreign competition as a kind of club to attack antitrust laws. "There is a national mood of fear about the progressiveness [i.e., innovativeness] of American firms," she says. "But I think the real problem is that foreign companies have beaten us to the gate and they're more productive. I think the subsidization of American companies is a red herring. Some of these foreign countries have limited amounts of subsidies. The world has become more progressive and this is for the good of everyone. We can benefit from it." Part of the problem, Fox says, is that U.S. companies have been complacent and that industries like the steel industry are now "feeling the kick. But I think we have to respond on the merits. I think we can use a lot of examples from Japan and Europe, including the right incentive system to make workers more productive. There ought to be more worker participation programs tried." Fox believes exports ought to be encouraged, of course, but not at the expense of the antitrust laws, which business seems to want to make a scapegoat for America's economic malaise.

Antitrust has always had several impulses behind it, as historian Richard Hofstadter noted in an essay, "What Happened to the Antitrust Movement." In reviewing the history of antitrust, Hofstadter stresses that there has always been a considerable amount of confusion and division over the economic intentions and effects of antitrust. The classic debate over the merits of combination versus those of competition is still going on today. The legacy of antitrust lies in the political sphere rather than the economic. Says Hofstadter: "Antitrust must be understood as the political judgment of a nation whose leaders had always shown a keen awareness of the economic foundations of politics. In this respect, the Sherman Act was simply another manifestation of an enduring American suspicion of concentrated power. . . . They wanted to keep concentrated private power from destroying democratic government." Or, as William Jennings Bryan said, "I do not divide monopolies in private hands into good monopolies and bad. There is no good monopoly in private hands." □

White Paper

(Continued From Front Cover)

tions where it is warranted; for example, when the authors contradict themselves.

I. A Case of Communist Military Involvement In the Third World

The first technique that is employed in the white paper is to conflate what is happening in El Salvador with other alleged examples of Soviet and Cuban military involvement. The political opposition is reduced to a group of extreme leftist guerrillas manipulated by Cuba and in turn manipulating "small, non-Marxist-Leninist parties" in order to deceive public opinion. Opposition activity is labeled terrorist. Journalists who describe the U.S.-backed regime's behavior as terrorist are labeled as witting or unwitting dupes of an orchestrated Communist propaganda effort.

What is most striking about this description of the opposition to the junta Government is the complete absence of

James Petras was a member of the People's Tribunal on El Salvador that met in Mexico in February. He is the author of the forthcoming Class, State and Power in the Third World *(Matthew Held & Osmun).*

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even a minimal account of the numerous social, political and civic movements that have developed in El Salvador over the past decade, which represent a wide range of political views and social strata. This collective omission on the part of the State Department is necessary if one is bent upon labeling the opposition as Soviet-Cuban manipulated and if one wishes to reduce the conflict to an East-West military confrontation.

The fact of the matter is that over the last decade an enormously rich variety of social organizations have emerged in El Salvador, embracing the great majority of professional and technical workers, peasants, labor and businesspeople. Their membership is in the hundreds of thousands and they are an integral part of the main political opposition group, the Revolutionary Democratic Front (F.D.R.). Almost all union members, peasant associations, university and professional people are members or supporters of social and civic organizations that are sympathetic to the front. The white paper clearly falsifies the political and social realities by excluding an account of the social forces involved with the opposition. Moreover, the origins of the opposition are clearly rooted in the social realities of the country—a point which the document admits in Section III in a politically vague and unspecified fashion when it notes that: "during the 1970's, both the legitimate grievances of the poor and landless and the growing aspirations of the expanding middle classes met increasingly with repression."

What the paper fails to acknowledge is that these "legitimate grievances" and "growing aspirations" found expression and were embodied in the mass organizations which are the essential components of the opposition groups that make up the F.D.R. The guerrilla movement is part and parcel of a larger political and social movement that has been and is repressed. Its activities stem from social realities of Salvadoran history, which the paper concedes is one of "repression, widespread poverty and concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few families." Because it is intent on demonstrating that the problem is Soviet-Cuban intervention, the paper fails to examine the crucial relationship between the repressive nature of the state, social inequalities and the growth of opposition and guerrilla movements.

The "Non-Marxist" Opposition

The striking feature of the Salvadoran revolution is the broad array of political forces that have united to oppose this regime—Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and Liberal Democrats, as well as independent Marxist groups and pro-Moscow coalitions. What is particularly unique in the Salvadoran case is the substantial leadership and its popular base of support that has developed among Christian communities. In all areas of social and political organization, a plurality of political tendencies are represented—among peasants, workers, professionals and so on. The attempt by the white paper to reduce the opposition to a handful of Marxist guerrillas manipulating the "non-Marxists" is a crude oversimplification and gross distortion of reality. What is remarkable in the document is the systematic exclusion of any mention of the mass-based Christian opposition, the twenty-eight Christian priests, nuns and community leaders murdered by the regime for their opposition activities. A discussion of these facts would complicate the State Department's job of selling intervention to the U.S. public.

In describing the emergence of the guerrilla forces, the document downgrades accounts of repressive political conditions under the junta. Yet detailed descriptions are available from the Organization of American States, the United Nations and, most comprehensively, from the Legal Aid Commission of the office of the Archbishop of El Salvador, which has compiled a lengthy dossier of the regime's systematic violence against all legal public organizations opposed to it in any way. Churches, trade unions, independent newspapers and peasant co-ops have been assaulted and bombed, leaving almost 9,000 dead between January 1980 and January 1981. The precondition for the growth of guerrilla activity was the closing of political channels by the U.S.-backed regime—not Soviet intervention.

Shortly after the first junta was established in October 1979, and before the rightist military took over, the guerrillas and political opposition groups offered a cease-fire. The rightists in the armed forces responded by escalating the number of assassinations, which touched off renewed hostilities. The decision to seek a military-political solution was forced upon the opposition by the military regime when it murdered Archbishop Oscar Romero on March 24, 1980, and then the seven leaders of the F.D.R. meeting in San Salvador on November 27, 1980. The subsequent purge of the moderate Christian Democrats and reformist military officers from the first Government junta is further proof that political options had been taken away. The white paper overlooks this context of regime violence in order to invent a Cuban-inspired conspiracy and to impute the violence of the regime to its victims. The killings by the military regimes increased from 147 in 1978 to 580 between January and October of 1979 and to 8,952 between January 1980 and January 1981. This increasing reign of terror clearly was instrumental in lowering the rate of popular participation in public activity and swelling the numbers of clandestine groups. Oblivious to this reality, the white paper describes the increase in guerrilla activity as a willful act of the "extreme left."

In its attempt to cast doubt on the opposition's legitimacy, the paper omits any mention of centrist defections from the U.S.-backed junta to join the leadership of the Revolutionary Democratic Front. The shift of a significant body of centrist opinion to the opposition is described disparagingly in the following fashion: "For appearances' sake, three small non-Marxist-Leninist political parties were brought into the front, though they have no representation in the D.R.U. [Unified Revolutionary Directorate]." These former Christian and Social Democratic allies of the U.S.-backed coalition had been described by U.S. officials a few weeks earlier as major political forces representing significant reform-minded sectors of Salvadoran public opinion. The fact that the pro-Moscow Communist Party of

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El Salvador is a marginal political force in the opposition coalition is never discussed by the white paper, nor is the fact that three of the four major leftist groups are critical of the Soviet Union.

Moreover, the paper's charge that Fidel Castro was responsible for unifying the left overlooks the fact that the unity of the leftist forces was under way prior to December 1979 as a result of increasing repression by the regime and pressure from the rank and file of all the groups. The F.D.R. was formed in El Salvador, not in Cuba, and was supported and promoted by European social-democratic forces. It was certainly not a product of the alleged machinations of Castro. As the participants stated at the time, the needs of the popular struggle, the limited options open to all opposition groups and the example set by the success of the Nicaraguan revolution were the main impulsions to unity.

Conspiratorial Hypothesis

The effort by the white paper to discredit the F.D.R. by describing it as a "front" disseminating propaganda for the guerrillas systematically ignores the popular support that these groups draw away from the junta, the internal political debates within the front and between the front and the guerrillas and the influence they have had in shaping the program in a reformist direction. The white paper's conspiratorial view requires that its authors overlook the importance of these moderates and their internal and external influence. The paper says nothing about the widespread international support for the front and the isolation of the junta. Indeed, it expands its conspiratorial hypothesis to find Cuban and Soviet-sponsored deception behind the front's success.

The numerous and detailed accounts of repression by the regime compiled by the Archbishop's Legal Aid Commission which have swayed world public opinion are not mentioned; nor are Amnesty International's publicized accounts of widespread systematic torture. In place of careful consideration of these documents, the white paper labels the 10,000 deaths attributed to the junta (13,000 by the time the paper appeared) an "extreme claim" of the guerrilla propaganda apparatus, which is parroted by the Cuban, Soviet and Nicaraguan media. Actually, the principal source of data collected on the regime's repression is non-Communist, Catholic and respected by most non-U.S. Government sources. In summary, through omissions and distortions, through labeling and simplification, the white paper early on fabricates a case against a broad-based popular revolutionary movement in order to prove "Communist military involvement."

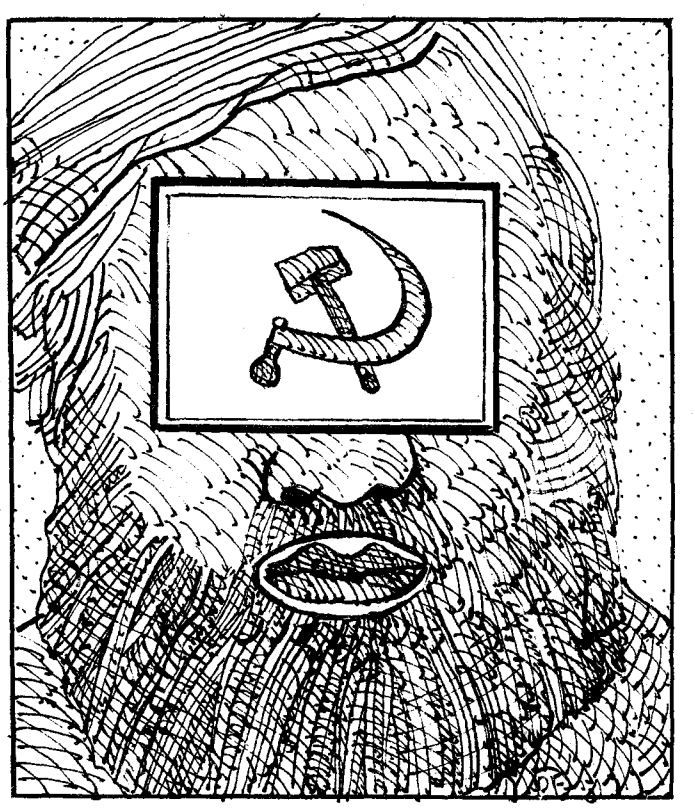
II. Communist Military Intervention: A Chronology

This section is the longest and most convoluted. It is also the section that is supposedly based on secret documents purporting to demonstrate Soviet-Cuban intervention and direction in El Salvador. We have no way of authenticating the documents nor the particular quotations which are cited. Nevertheless, even in the terms in which the documents are presented, there is serious doubt that they make the case the white paper claims, despite the self-serving assertions by the authors that the evidence is "incontrovertible."

In the first section, the white paper describes the revolutionaries prior to September of 1980 as "diverse guerrilla groups . . . ill-coordinated and ill-equipped, armed with pistols and a varied assortment of hunting rifles and shotguns." In effect, the document affirms that up to a few months ago, the guerrilla movement consisted of local forces employing their own resources and forging their own programs with no outside support, let alone control. The subsequent aid then is directed toward a leadership and organization that has been shaped by organizational and political experiences rooted in many years of independent activity. It is highly unlikely that such groups would suddenly submit themselves to foreign tutelage or be subject to foreign manipulation. The initial document which purports to "demonstrate" Cuban involvement is a letter of salutation from the guerrillas to Castro thanking him for help. There is no mention of arms, political direction or military coordination; rather, the emphasis is on the need for Salvadoran groups to build and coordinate their activities among themselves. The next reference is to a meeting of guerrillas at the Hungarian Embassy in Mexico City at which the word "requests" was apparently mentioned. Without any rhyme or reason, the white paper extracts the word and appends a parenthesis: "(possibly for arms)." To this gratuitous appended parenthesis is added a list of the Eastern European ambassadors present, presumably to suggest a neo-Comintern conclave.

Alleged Soviet Help

Inadvertently, however, a document cited by the white paper does demonstrate the *absence* of pro-Soviet forces



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within the actual guerrilla struggle. It quotes Shafik Handal, secretary general of the Salvadoran Communist Party, as mentioning the need to "speed up reorganization and put the party on a war footing." As late as April 28, 1980, the Salvadoran Communist Party is not yet prepared to engage in the ongoing guerrilla struggle. Then the white paper quotes Handal as saying, "I'm in agreement with taking advantage of the possibilities of assistance from the socialist camp. . . . We are not yet taking advantage of it." From this we can deduce incontrovertibly that the socialist camp was not involved at all up to then in El Salvador; that any assistance was a "possibility"; and that the overriding concern of the Salvadoran Communist Party was how to use the "socialist camp." This is hardly the attitude of a docile tool of Moscow conspirators.

Finally, regarding unification of the left, Handal mentions that "the idea of involving everyone in the area has already been suggested to Fidel himself. . . . Fidel thought well of the idea." In other words, the idea for unifying the left did not even initiate with Castro; it came from the Salvadorans and Castro merely granted his approval.

What the white paper fails to mention in all its accounts of guerrilla and leftist meetings with the Communists are the frequent contacts among all the opposition groups—including centrist Social Democrats and Christian Democrats—and their political counterparts in other countries, from Stockholm to Mexico City, from Washington, D.C., to Bonn. Requests for aid and support were laid before U.S. State Department officials and European Social Democrats. Outside the United States these pleas have, at least in part, met with favorable responses. Europeans favor a "Zimbabwe solution" in El Salvador—unifying the opposition and working for a center-left regime. The white paper's attempt to attribute this idea to secret Communist cabals is willful ignorance. The paper's selective discussion of meetings between guerrillas and Communists and its omission of meetings by other opposition forces in the European and Latin American left is a tactic more appropriate to a lawyer's brief.

Handal is also supposed to have visited Nicaragua to hold discussions about setting up an office there from which to disseminate propaganda and make political contacts. Such overtures from dissidents in one country to officials in another are commonplace the world over. In this case, the possibility was merely *discussed*—which would seem to be within the bounds of propriety for officials of a sovereign government.

Handal's Travels

The heavy stuff is still to come. The next itinerary for the peripatetic Handal is listed as "travels in the East." During his stop in Moscow, supposedly in search of arms, Handal, we are told, met with a Soviet official. This official merely suggested that Handal travel to Vietnam and offered to pay for his trip. (The white paper's sources apparently could not determine if it was one way or round trip.)

The white paper goes on to claim that in Vietnam Handal gained concrete support—sixty tons of arms. The East Germans told him they would put out a search for available arms, as did the Czechs, Bulgarians, Hungarians and Ethiopians. Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu, chairman of Ethiopia's Provisional Military Administrative Council, we are told, promised "several thousand weapons." The white paper adds that the Russians asked if they could send thirty student volunteers to take part in the "war," and agreed to ship the Vietnamese arms. Eventually, even the Palestine Liberation Organization and Nicaragua pledged arms. According to the white paper, a total of 780 tons of arms were to be transported to Nicaragua via Cuba, and then to El Salvador. By September 26, there were supposedly 130 tons of arms cached in Nicaragua. The paper claims that "in September and October the number of flights to Nicaragua from Cuba increased sharply. These flights had the capacity to transport several hundred tons of cargo."

Yet we then learn that at the end of September the Sandinists "suspend their weapons deliveries to El Salvador for one month. . . . When the shipments resume in October, as much as 120 tons of weapons and matériel are still in Nicaragua and some 300-400 tons are in Cuba." There are curious discrepancies in this account. For example, we are told that there were 130 tons of arms in Nicaragua by September 26. We are also informed that shipments to El Salvador were "suspended" for one month at the end of September but that flights from Cuba continued through October. Yet when the shipments resumed in October "as much as 120 tons of weapons and matériel are still in Nicaragua. . . ." Since no weapons were going to El Salvador and presumably loaded planes were continuing to arrive from Cuba, it seems odd, to say the least, that at the end of the one month's suspension, Nicaragua had a net loss of ten tons of arms in its stores for shipment. Apparently, the white paper's several authors didn't bother to coordinate their stories.

Swamped with Arms

After reporting that only about 2.5 million tons were shipped in November, the white paper authors step up the pace dramatically. In December, we are told, there was such a deluge of arms that the Salvadoran insurgents complained that they could not absorb them. Yet earlier in the white paper we were told how poorly armed the 4,000 to 5,000 guerrillas were in September 1980 ("ill-coordinated and ill-equipped, armed with pistols and a varied assortment of hunting rifles and shotguns"). Is it conceivable that within a few weeks in December the guerrillas were inundated with arms? What is more, the flood mysteriously turned into a drought, because in the March 1 *New York Times* the guerrilla leaders are said to be complaining that they do not have an adequate supply of arms, a shortage that hindered their January offensive.

During this period of supposedly massively flowing arms, no specific figures are ever given, nor is there any detailed explanation of how so many (undisclosed) arms flowed into El Salvador. There are only references to a Cessna that crashed, and it is *speculated* that it had arms ("unloaded passengers and possibly weapons"). A second plane strays

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into Government hands, and "numerous weapons are captured." We are told of shipments in motor launches and overland, but there is no evidence that any of these were captured, even though the roads and seaways are easily policed and at least some large shipments should have been intercepted. But the security forces' total bag is one trailer truck carrying 100 U.S. rifles and some mortars. The Honduras-El Salvador border is heavily patrolled, and needless to say the roads that would be passable by trucks loaded with arms are closely watched. The paucity of evidence suggests that the arms flow is minimal; thus, the claims of massive outside intervention are unsubstantiated. The failure of the guerrilla offensive in January was in part the result of inadequate armaments coupled with massive infusions of U.S. arms to the regime's forces. Even junta spokesman José Napoleón Duarte and former U.S. Ambassador Robert White (who originally promoted the story of a massive weapons influx) would question the need for further U.S. arms.

The white paper's evidence of outside Communist arms shipments supports only a small fraction of its claims. Such shipments as there were did not approach the flow of weapons, advisers, napalm, helicopter gunships and the like to the military-civilian dictatorship from the United States.

III. The Government: The Search for Order and Democracy

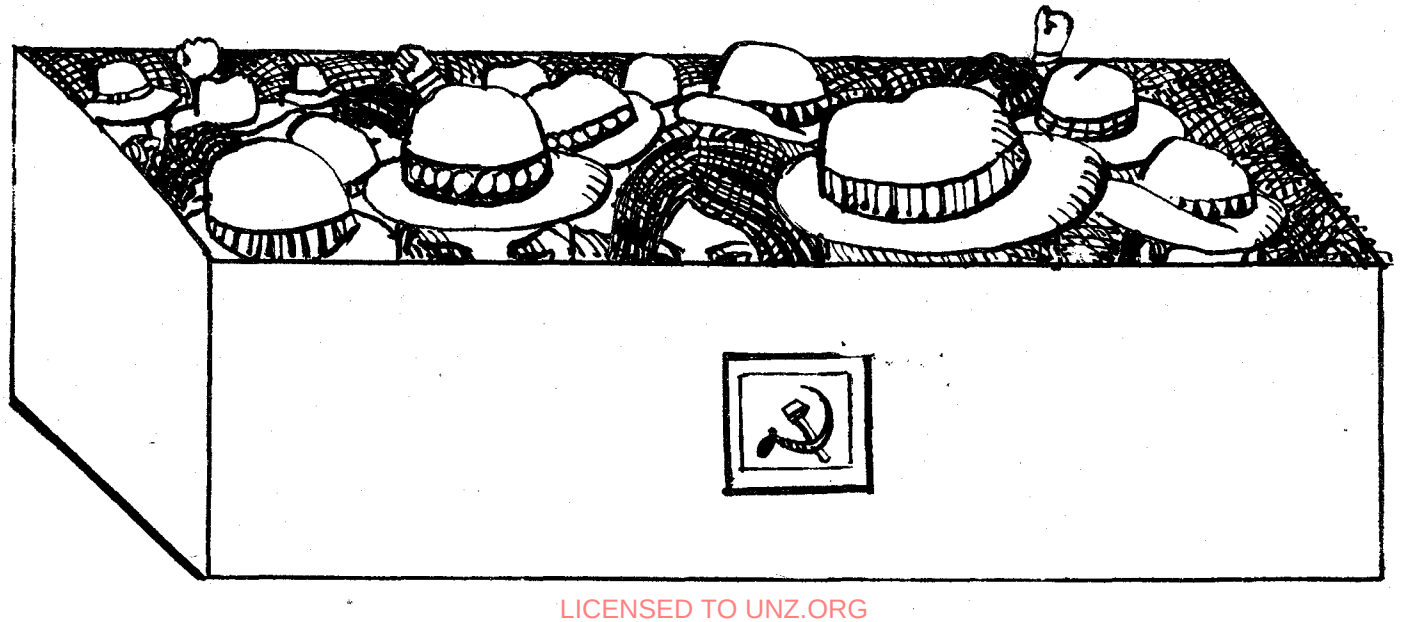
The massive propaganda effort to focus attention on outside Communist intervention is a way of diverting attention from the repressive regime that the United States is supporting. The Reagan Administration's tactic is to win backing for the junta not because of what it stands for (few democratic governments would support a government whose army has killed 13,000 civilians) but to "draw the line" against "outside intervention."

In its opening section the white paper claims that El Salvador experienced "considerable economic progress" during the 1960s, "although . . . the political system remained in the hands of a traditional economic elite backed by the military." The facts are that between 1961 and 1975 the proportion of landless laborers rose from 11 percent to 40 percent; the level of unemployment climbed from 10 percent in 1960 to 25 percent in 1979. Whatever economic progress took place did not benefit the workers and the peasants. Rather, the growth of El Salvador's gross national product was intimately tied to its repressive system. Prosperity for some was matched by the repression of the many. The white paper notes that the "legitimate grievances of the poor and landless and the growing aspirations of the expanding middle classes met increasingly with repression." The paper does not go on to identify the organizations and leaders which come to express these "legitimate grievances" and middle-class "aspirations" because they are not found in the current junta but among the opposition. Moreover, these aspirations and grievances are not answered by the military measures and repressive forms of rulership undertaken by the current regime. The document's systematic evasion of the sources of violence and the U.S. Government's responsibility is revealed in its attempt to blame it on everyone: "El Salvador has long been a violent country."

In fact, El Salvador has not been a violent country—its U.S.-backed oligarchical-military regimes have been violent, killing 30,000 people in 1932 and running the country with an iron fist ever since. Between 1946 and 1979, the United States has provided Salvadoran military dictatorships with more than $17 million in military assistance and trained 2,000 military officers while providing the ruling oligarchy with $157.7 million in economic aid.

The "Progressive" Coalition

The white paper describes the governing coalition that took over after the coup in October 1979 as being made up of progressive civilian and military officers. Yet the great majority of these progressives defected to the F.D.R. or were killed by the rightist faction which is now in control. The "three small non-Marxist-Leninist political parties" that the white paper earlier dismisses as window dressing in the F.D.R. leadership are later portrayed as significant pro-



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gressives when they were in the first coalition. The white paper's inconsistency is apparent in the way it attempts to reclaim the progressive character of the original junta while discrediting the genuine progressives who resigned from it in protest or were pushed out. The systematic purge of the progressives by the rightist faction within the junta between October 1979 and March 1980 is described in the same vacuous, euphemistic language that is used throughout the white paper when the authors wish to cover their tracks: "After an initial period of instability, the new Government stabilized around a coalition that includes military participants in the October 1979 coup, the Christian Democratic Party and independent civilians." The white paper leaves out the purge of the Majano reformists, and the bulk of the Christian Democrats who are now in opposition, along with university faculty and students, Social Democrats and the other forces of reform. It does not say that ultra-right forces deeply involved in repressive actions are all that remain of the original junta that took power in October 1979.

The white paper claims that "since March 1980, this coalition has begun broad social changes." Actually, the number of peasants killed and co-ops that fell under military occupation rose sharply: peasants killed increased from 126 per month in February, to 203 in March, to 423 in July, totaling 3,272 for the glorious year of agrarian reform! The paper then repeats the falsehood that the opposition to this "reform" consists of Marxist-Leninist guerrilla terrorists and the three insignificant non-Marxist-Leninist political parties operating outside of the country. Once again, the authors omit mention of the absence of any political rights in El Salvador, and the state of war that the junta has declared against all opposition.

Extremist Symbiosis

The white paper then proceeds to argue that the Government "faces armed opposition from the extreme right as well as from the left. . . . A symbiotic relationship has developed between the terrorism practiced by extremists of both left and right." This notion has been systematically refuted by the Archbishop's Legal Aid Commission report on repression, which adduces evidence showing that in 1980, 66 percent of the assassinations were committed by Government security forces, and 14 percent were committed by right-wing death squads. Moreover, voluminous testimony, documents and photographs have emerged to substantiate the frequent and close collaboration between the death squads and the regime's security forces. The "symbiosis" causing most of the violence is between the regime and the death squads, not the right and left.

In this regard it is important to note that not one right-wing death squad assassin has ever been apprehended, let alone prosecuted, despite the public nature of most of the killings. This in itself should dispel any notion that the regime is innocent in the activity of the death squads. The Legal Aid Commission study further demonstrates that the bulk of the victims were poor peasants, students and wage workers—the groups in whose names the purported reforms were carried out. In fact the reforms were mere facades for the militarization of the country. The escalation of regime terror against the peasants is the surest indication of this.

The white paper voices concern about the murder and rape of the U.S. nuns, but it fails to mention the fact that the nuns were opposed to U.S. policy, and were murdered by the junta along with more than a score of other church people working for the poor. While the white paper claims to be interested in a complete investigation of these killings, former Ambassador White stated emphatically that Washington has not made any effort to pressure the junta and has effectively collaborated with the regime in covering up the murders—rewarding its perpetrators with additional arms and economic aid. [See Penny Lernoux's article on page 361 of this issue.]

In one of its more cynical statements, the paper notes that "few Salvadorans participate in anti-Government demonstrations"—implying that they support the Government. The scores of dead protesters, including mutilated and decapitated corpses that appeared in the wake of every protest march, have no doubt had a dampening effect on demonstrations. But to equate a terrorized population with one that approves the Government is a grotesque distortion which only indicates how out of touch this Administration is with the political reality in El Salvador and the rest of the Third World. There is not only an absence of political protest in El Salvador, there is an absence of all forms of political expression; the dictatorship is total. The support for the front and the guerrillas has not diminished—it has gone underground. The white paper's claim that U.S. aid "has helped create jobs and feed the hungry" is belied by the accounts of Church sources. U.S. economic aid has contributed to massive military corruption; military aid hardens the resolve of the military dictators and increases the rate of killing. U.S. economic aid does not keep up with the massive flight of private capital estimated at more than $1.5 billion during the past year. The collapse of the Salvadoran economy and the massive exodus of refugees from repression in rural areas hardly testifies to the "success" of what the paper describes as the "Duarte Government." The latter is a figment of the State Department's imagination, for real power continues to be vested within the military—a point emphasized by a military official in an interview in *Le Monde* recently.

Conclusion

The white paper is a thin tissue of falsifications, distortions, omissions and simplifications directed toward covering up increased U.S. support for a murderous regime. It has sought to transform a war between the regime and its people into an East-West struggle and to deny the internal socioeconomic and political roots of the struggle. The purpose of these distortions is to mobilize U.S. public opinion behind the new Administration's policies not only in El Salvador but throughout the Third World. The hypocrisy suffusing the white paper is vice's tribute to virtue, for it tacitly recognizes that if the truth were presented, the American people would balk at supporting a regime that is rewarded for killing its noblest sons and daughters who seek social justice in El Salvador. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Pictures at Ground Zero

TAMAR JACOBY

UNFORGETTABLE FIRE: Pictures Drawn by Atomic Bomb Survivors. *Edited by the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation. Pantheon Books. 109 pp. $15.95. Paper $7.95.*

One day in May 1974, an old man in wooden sandals appeared at the Hiroshima office of the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) carrying a picture that he himself had drawn: a simple sketch, precise but not particularly vivid, of a kind that a child might make. A legend written in just above the horizon identifies the scene: "At about 4 P.M., August 6, 1945, near Yorozuyo Bridge." There is a corpse lying on the bridge and a number of tiny figures, apparently crying out for help, floating in the river below it; in another part of the picture a woman lies buried under a smoldering sheet of tin roofing. The old man explained to the people at the studio that a recent television drama about the war had prompted him to draw the picture. He remembered that he had passed the bridge as he wandered about in the burning city looking for his only son. "Even now I cannot erase the scene from my memory. Before my death I wanted to draw it and leave it for others."

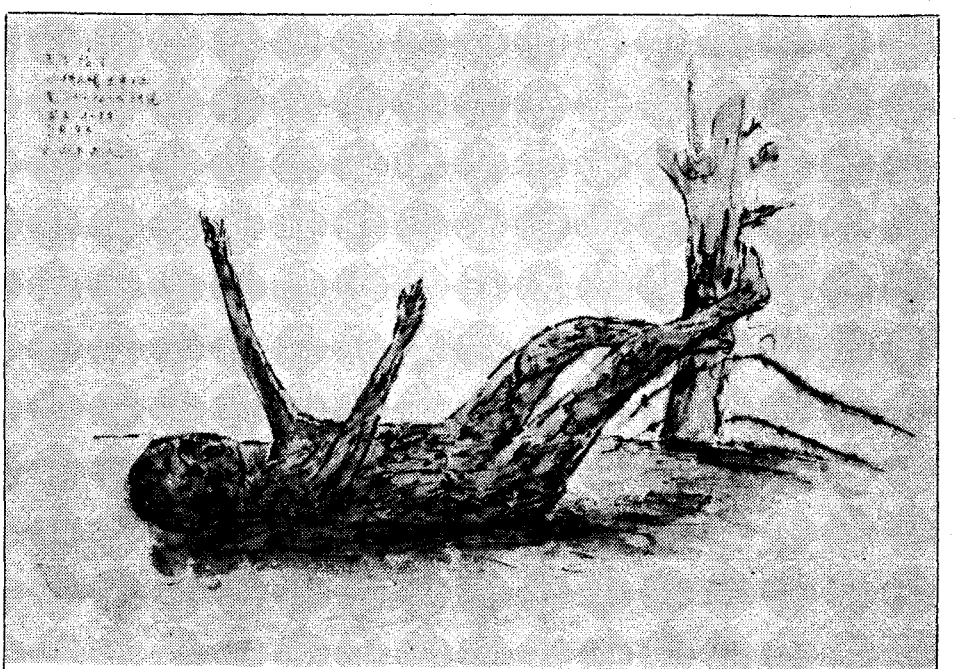
A few weeks later, the NHK broadcast the drawing on a local morning program, appealing to other survivors to contribute pictures of the bombing of the city. Within a month they had collected nearly a thousand pictures, some of them sent by mail, many brought directly to the studio; they were displayed in an exhibition marking the twenty-ninth anniversary of the day the bomb was dropped. *Unforgettable Fire* is a selection of some 100 of the pictures, accompanied by captions or explanations written by the people who drew them and a short text by the organizers at the NHK. In part, their aim was to encourage a "civic movement" like the one the station launched in the mid-1960s to recover information about the people who lived and worked in Hiroshima in early 1945—part of an effort to build a scale model of the area of the city that had been destroyed.

But the people at the NHK also wanted to bring "outsiders" into what they called "the long-closed world of the first victims of nuclear war," to bridge the gap between that closed world and the arms race that continues in the world at large. Even "during the short time in which these pictures were drawn," notes the NHK conclusion, "the spread of nuclear weapons has accelerated." It is clear enough from the pictures that the people of Hiroshima cannot forget the atomic bomb. What the NHK fears is that the rest of the world may forget all too easily.

The pictures tell us that it was a cloudless morning; one caption recalls "the faint buzzing of a B-29"; lots of survivors, whether from the city or surrounding villages, remember the bright red fireball that appeared in the sky, at first about the size of a baseball, growing rapidly until it exploded some five seconds later. It is sometimes called *pika*, or lightning, and survivors still do not agree whether the light it cast was pink or blue or white. The NHK introduction reminds us that its temperature was 300,000 degrees centigrade. There are also drawings of faces burned black by the heat and houses blown over by the blast of the explosion. Others show the mushroom cloud—beautiful, eerie pictures without a hint of the destruction that came with it. Many survivors have drawn the "black rain" and the fires that seemed to start spontaneously—as if set by "a devil's hand"—when flammable building material fell on embers and cooking stoves and live electrical wires. But most of the images depict other victims: individuals, crowds, stick figures trapped in the debris of falling buildings, lines of people, half naked and covered with burns, tramping through the flaming city under the dark rain.

Many of the pictures are crudely drawn, and much of what they show is familiar enough from other reports of what happened in Hiroshima. But even the most hastily drawn and awkward images have a dreamlike intensity missing from the photographs and factual accounts that have come out of Hiroshima in the thirty-five years since it was bombed—an intensity that has at least as much to do with the way scenes are treated as with the gruesome subject.

Some are accomplished watercolors;



MASATO YAMASHITA, AGE 52:

"On the west embankment of a military training field was a young boy four or five years old. He was burned black, lying on his back, with his arms pointed toward heaven."

Tamar Jacoby is on the staff of The New York Review of Books *and writes frequently for* The Nation.

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others, scratchy pencil drawings. Survivors used ink and crayons and magic markers on whatever kind of paper was at hand: drawing paper but also backs of calendars, advertising fliers and the thin paper used in Japan to cover sliding doors. The styles, too, vary enormously. One series of simple drawings looks much like a comic strip, and there are several lurid illustrations that could appear in a paperback novel. A few of the pictures are surprisingly sophisticated, composed obliquely like a Hiroshige woodblock. Another, a sheet of frontal anatomical drawings, looks more like a page from a health manual.

Some of the most moving images are the least realistic: quickly drawn figures gesturing wildly, crayoned over in red, or a mound of anonymous, stylized corpses in a surreal landscape. Several of the sketches look like diagrams or maps with tiny symbols to represent fire or injured people, or the spot where the witness stood. Often the scale is inconsistent, so that a single picture will include tiny stick figures in the foreground or background along with a larger, three-dimensional drawing of a more sharply remembered scene. In many cases, there are elaborate legends written on the pictures themselves, and often the tiny figures spout long streams of ideographic speech—usually cries for help or water.

What the pictures share is a peculiar simplicity, not only in artistic style but also in the starkness of the images chosen—images polished smooth by memory. Even in the pictures of crowds and enormous vistas, the witnesses have focused on a few particular and vivid details chosen from among the general blur of suffering they saw in Hiroshima in August 1945: the hundreds of corpses, crowds of wounded people and countless scenes of devastation. One man remembers a professor standing unharmed in his underwear in front of a wall of flames, holding a rice ball in his hand—and somehow, in the artist's memory, the rice ball has become an enduring symbol. Someone else remembers the straight black hair of a dead woman hanging from a charred streetcar. A third drew simply the hand of a corpse lying on its back in the road. According to the caption, the hand was

> lifted to the sky and the fingers were burning with blue flames. The fingers were shortened to one-third and distorted. A dark liquid was running to the ground along the hand.

And yet, for all their vividness, the pictures remain in a kind of "closed world," still strangely inaccessible to "outsiders." In part, this is because the scenes are so unreal. The fascinating beauty of the mushroom cloud; the city center transformed into a sea of fire; the endless rubble that was left afterward; the unknown and inexplicable diseases; and the corpses, often frozen in midstride, like the inhabitants of Pompeii: all of this gives the pictures a fantastic, almost visionary quality. In several of the drawings, crowds of wounded people seem to float freely in space, without any backdrop or other point of reference. Many of the people in the pictures are hurrying here and there, frantically looking for relatives or trying to escape the flames. Others look dazed, hardly aware of the people or destruction around them. One woman, who was 14 years old in 1945, writes on her drawing:

> When I stood up in a frantic effort to look around there was darkness. Terribly frightened I thought I was alone in a world of death. . . . I was standing amid the ruins of my house. No one was around. It was quiet, very quiet, an eerie moment.

Only one of the contributors to *Unforgettable Fire* mentions the United States: a caption written on a jumbled pencil drawing identifies "Naked girls crying, 'Stupid America!' " Another picture shows enemy planes strafing a raft of injured people, but for the most part the survivors show no interest in the moral and historical complexities surrounding the first atomic bomb. They seem almost oblivious to the war, concerned even amid the chaos with small, personal details like losing a pair of scissors or a lunch box. Both American strategy and Japanese surrender go unmentioned, even in the text by the NHK. In the eyes of the victims, it seems to have been an inevitable tragedy—without a villain. For all the misfortune in these pictures, there is no evil, no brutality, no outrage, only the resigned hand-wringing of captions like the one that reads, "Oh, the hateful A-bomb!" Perhaps it is impossible for a survivor to imagine that his ordeal may not have been necessary.

There is one moral issue that troubles many of the witnesses, even thirty years after the event: the guilt the survivor feels because he survived when others did not. One woman glosses her drawing: "Apologizing in my heart to my parents, I decided to seek shelter." Many people report what they did to help other victims, sometimes effectively, often not. But perhaps even more often the accompanying explanations state: "I did not know what to do," "There was nothing I could do," "I gave up looking for him."

These pictures may provide some sort of expiation—a way, the NHK suggests, for troubled survivors "to make amends individually for the people who died." Certainly none of the people who submitted pictures imagined that anything they wrote or drew could convey the horror of what happened in Hiroshima. The people at the NHK report that many witnesses became frantic and tearful as they tried to explain their pictures. One survivor points out in a caption that her picture shows only a small part of the destruction in the city. The flayed skin described again and again and pictured in many of the drawings is one of the hardest things to portray. None of these survivors succeed, and finally it is left to us to imagine it. "I do not think," one woman writes, "I can describe even a ten-thousandth of the reality by drawing a picture or telling a story. I think only those

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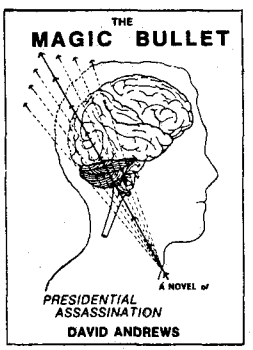

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who experienced it can understand."

For my part, I put down the book with mixed emotions. I felt there should be something reassuring about the guileless innocence of these survivors, who seem without rancor or unusual pessimism in spite of the destruction they have seen. And yet, that innocence is somehow troubling: like the closed, unreal world shown in these pictures, it seems so far removed from the world caught up in the nuclear arms race. □

What More Is There to Say?

VIVIAN GORNICK

THE MISSING PERSON. *By Doris Grumbach. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 264 pp. $11.95.*

The relation between the prose of a novel and its characters has at times seemed to me like the relation between a mountain and its climbers. In order to get to the top—that is, to maintain life and achieve completion—the climbers must receive some help from the mountain: toeholds, crevices, unexpected plateaus and weed patches where a climber can rest, recover stamina and gain new energy for the long haul. Sometimes the mountain is a sheer rock face, the climber is a powerful, trained being and the climb over an unbroken surface *is* the story. When that happens we are usually in the presence of masters.

Two years ago, Doris Grumbach wrote a novel so oddly and so purposefully constructed that it put me in mind of this metaphor. *Chamber Music* was composed of the kind of clear, direct sentences that promise to open out and provide the characters with a fine irregular ground on which to stand long enough to breathe and grow. But the clean, simple sentences became a blank face for which these climbers were no match. There were no toeholds or ledges for the characters to hold on, gain absorptive life and achieve the memorable state of earned survival.

When I read *Chamber Music* I thought I knew why this had happened. The protagonist was a 90-year-old woman of the aristocratic artist class who was now about to tell the secrets of her famous life. Grumbach made her a first-person narrator and then proceeded to write as though she herself knew no more than the character knew. As the character was both a Victorian and a remarkably childish woman, insufficient in perception, depth, or self-understanding, much of what she "knew" was banal, and when she thought she was being most revealing it was as though she were writing a letter to the editor: her confession remained buried inside the sealed surface of what often read like public prose.

Now a second novel has been written, and again the protagonist is both a public person and an infantile woman. It becomes clear that Grumbach feels a special attachment to what this kind of life suggests, and is persuaded that a tale told in the opaque voice and surface language of her protagonist *is* the story.

The character in *The Missing Person* is modeled on Marilyn Monroe; thus, both the public persona and the infantilism are of pathological proportion. Set in the 1930s, the novel tells of Fanny Marker, who grows up in Utica, New York, the daughter of a pugnacious beautician who lives with hard hats. One of them rapes Fanny when she's 14 and sends her on her way to waitressing, small-town whoring, a trip to New York, a homosexual agent who gets her into pictures and, finally, her transformation into Franny Fuller, one of the most potent images of sexual fantasy ever produced in Hollywood.

Fanny remains locked up inside Franny: brutalized, lost, emotionally speechless, a damaged child screaming silently for help from behind her famous drowsy eyelids, her open wet mouth, her sexually anesthetized body. A number of good people fling themselves against her extraordinary inertness, each one hoping to induce response; all are defeated by the infinite power of intractable damage. For a long while these people continue to replace one another in her life because a sickly sweetness emanates from the fetal vulnerability inside the gorgeous face and body (the child starving helplessly before life's feast is infinitely more appealing than your ordinary healthy belligerent), but each one in turn (the Joe DiMaggio figure, the Arthur Miller and the Billy Wilder) gives up, abandoning her to a neurosis that is

Vivian Gornick is the author of, among other books, Essays in Feminism *(Harper & Row).*

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siphoning the oxygen from the room.

However, that's all right with Franny. She simply does what she's always done since she became a movie star: she disappears. Periodically, when the panic threatens to drown her, Franny smears dirt on her face, puts on workmen's clothes and disappears into Los Angeles. Within days or weeks she is found and returned to her somnambulistic life where she goes through the motions until the panic rises again, and once more she becomes a missing person. By book's end, her disappearances have become a general bore; for Hollywood, Franny Fuller is a dead issue.

Doris Grumbach is not an untalented writer. She has skill, and sometimes power. The description in *Chamber Music* of Robert Maclaren's slow dying of syphilis—his silent, ulcerated head tyrannizing the room as it stares out from the bed—is truly fine, filled with affective horror. And in *The Missing Person*, the description of Willis Lord—a character based on John Gilbert, the silent movie star who became an alcoholic recluse after he failed to make the transition to talkies—also accumulates into a fine portrait of the deranging silence inside these empty lives. But the metaphoric use to which Franny Fuller is put simply doesn't work.

Speaking of the literary appropriation these days of Marilyn Monroe's life, a friend of mine said quietly: "What more can be said of Monroe than she herself said through her suicide? When she killed herself she was saying, 'My loneliness is enormous, the discrepancy between my actual life and the one that has been made up for me is vast, my daily humiliation has become unbearable.' What more is there to say? And who in fact has said more?"

Franny Fuller is written to say more, but she doesn't. She doesn't because she is written as she might have written of herself: all innocent-cynical sheer surface meant to reflect back the etherized vacancy of a life that does not, finally, know more about itself than the insufficient person living it knows. For this kind of writing to work well the accumulated surfaces *must* "know" more, must reveal the character in spite of herself. Franny is not revealed against her will. No deeper understanding of her disintegrated self emerges from these pages that fail to accumulate into something memorable or suggestive.

Chamber Music was not an accident or a mistake. Doris Grumbach, who has a talent for rendering the famously ignorant or banal in a detached, recording voice, thinks, as the Pop artists did, that the thing speaks monumentally and metaphorically for itself: just put Campbell's tomato soup or Marilyn Monroe on the canvas or on the page exactly as the advertisers or the publicists would, and something marvelous happens. Not true. There is a misplaced assurance here that doesn't earn itself in the work. The terrifying irony beneath a famous childish life that became a national image remains unachieved, and we are left with a voluptuously underweight character scratching along the thin hard edge of an unbroken surface. □

INJUSTICE

Whoever discovers who I am will find out who you are,
and the why, and the where.
Early on, I discovered the range of injustice.
Hunger was not just hunger,
but rather the measure of man.
Cold and wind were also measures.
The proud man ra ked up a hundred hungers, then fell.
Pedro was buried at the hundredth cold.
The poor house endured a continuous wind.
And I learned that centimeter and gram,
spoon and tongue, were measures of greed,
and that the harassed man soon fell
in a hole, and knew no more.
Nothing more. That was the setting,
the real gift, the reward, light, life.
That was it, suffering cold and hunger,
not having shoes, feeling fear
in front of the judge, in front of the other one,
the other being with his sword or his inkwell,
and so, digging and cutting,
sewing, making bread, planting wheat,
hammering every nail the wood needed,
burrowing in the earth as in intestines
to drag out, blind, the crackling coal
and, even more, going up rivers and mountains,
riding horses, tending to ships,
baking tiles, blowing glass, washing clothes
in such a way as to make that seem
a kingdom brought newly into being,
grapes shining in their clusters,
when a man set his mind on being content,
and was not, and was not so. I was discovering
the laws of misery,
the throne of bloodstained gold,
the whore freedom,
the land with no overcoat,
the wounded, worn-out heart,
and talk of the dead ones, tearless,
dry, like fallen stones.
And then I left off being a child
because I learned that for my people
life was not allowed
and the grave was forbidden them.

Pablo Neruda
(Translated from the Spanish by Alastair Reid)

This poem will be included in Isla Negra: A Notebook, *to be published this summer by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Pablo Neruda, the Chilean Nobel Laureate, composed it just over ten years before his death in 1973.*

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Have Sitcoms Killed Litcoms?

ALICE K. TURNER

BREWSTER'S MILLIONS. *By George Barr McCutcheon. Continuum. 207 pp. $11.95.*

THREE MEN IN A BOAT. *By Jerome K. Jerome. Continuum. 192 pp. $11.95.*

One casualty of the television era that nobody seems to have noticed is that old staple of the best-seller lists, the humorous novel, or novelized memoir. The light, middlebrow entertainment of *Reader's Digest* persuasion has been knocked right out of the ring by the TV sitcom, and today it's not possible to write, or even to read, a *Don't Go Near the Water* or a *No Time for Sergeants. Charlie's Angels* and the other "jigglies" have picked off the mildly smutty "Coffee, Tea or Me" books popular only a decade ago. High and low comedy still exist, of course, but the center has disappeared; old *Cheaper by the Dozen* fans now seem perfectly content with *Eight Is Enough.*

I don't think the genre deserves a black armband. Few great written works will be lost to future ages as the new crop of college-humor-magazine stars defect to the network gold mines. Only an American Lit professor would extol *Alice Adams* (an older example of sentimental humor) at the expense of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show.* By the end of the century, the prof's successor will be teaching *Mary*; already the 1935 film starring Katharine Hepburn is approached with academic reverence while Booth Tarkington's novels gather dust.

But in the beginning was the Word, and sitcoms in written form once flourished. One that was immensely popular, a novel called *Brewster's Millions,* was published in 1902 by a Hoosier journalist and "humorist" named George Barr McCutcheon. The plot is a classic: a young fellow inherits $1 million, then discovers that, in a year's time, he will inherit $7 million, but only if he can divest himself, by legitimate means, of every penny of that first million. Mad spending and madcap adventures ensue. Fatty Arbuckle made the silent movie in 1921, and Mischa Auer and June Havoc starred in the talkie in 1945. And the plot turned up on *Fantasy Island* only a few weeks ago.

The original novel has just been reprinted by a small publishing company as a "Continuum Classic of Humor," one of two books launching a new line. Continuum has heretofore devoted itself to the care and preservation of newly found or previously uncollected pieces in the enormous *oeuvre* of P. G. Wodehouse, and it's easy to see how the idea of starting a library of other humorous works must have seemed a bright one. But there's a big problem: though he claimed to be no more than a "performing flea," Wodehouse was, in fact, a whole circus, a master of inspired whimsy; McCutcheon isn't even an act.

When it was published, *Brewster's Millions* filled a real need (I'm assuming, from empirical evidence, that we *need* sitcoms), and the fact that it was without any literary grace didn't matter a bit. But now *Fantasy Island* has simply eliminated the competition. We can't *read* this stuff anymore.

Continuum's other sample of vintage humor is something else again, a curious little book with a cult of its own. A friend of mine who once wandered into an earnest academic discussion of Conrad and Melville was asked by one professor, "What's your favorite sea story?" "*Three Men in a Boat,*" she replied, not missing a beat, and ending the conversation.

That story catches the right droll note. This little novel, or novelized memoir, or whatever it is, by the double-monikered Jerome K. Jerome (*Punch* used to call him 'Arry K'Arry) tells the story of three young fellows (to say nothing of the dog) on a boating holiday and the mishaps that befall them. The book's style is shamelessly appropriated from Mark Twain. Twain specialized in ruminative burlesque, mock-genial and sly; he liked to put a lot of information and local color in his books, and once in a while he gave way to genuine feeling. That's exactly Jerome's tone, but he delivers it in an English accent, which is funny. Mississippi bumpkinism translates pretty well into muddleheaded Brit twittishness, and *Three Men in a Boat* remains, eighty-nine years later, a charming, goofy period piece.

I'd like to quote from the book, but Jerome is discursive, like Twain. Chapter six opens by comparing the year to "a fair young maid, trembling with strange wakening pulses on the brink of womanhood," describes the back streets of Kingston, compares the sleeping habits of the Virgin Queen to the drinking habits of one of the three men, discusses Saxon King Edwy and carved oak staircases, relates the cautionary tale of young Stivings, who loved to do Latin exercises, reflects on the financial future of the china dog as work of art—and here the narrator takes the towline to pull the boat upriver to Hampton Court, which prompts an anecdote about getting lost in the maze there. The next chapter is mostly about sports clothes, but veers to an irritable rustic dialogue about tombstones.

It's *written* numor. No pauses for canned laughter. Recently I caught part of a BBC dramatization of it on public television. The scenery and costumes (blazers and boaters) were quaintly pretty, and some of the acting was properly foolish, but the total effect was, oh, a bit wet. As a sitcom, *Boat* sinks. As a literary "classic of humor" (however minor: Jerome was taking off Twain, not competing with him), it paddles along.

But how do you follow it? Most buried full-length books of humor are

Alice K. Turner is fiction editor of Playboy *magazine.*

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dead as poor Yorick. Short fiction (or near-fiction) might work better, and it's possible that a story collection, rather along the lines of the "bedside treasuries" that Bennett Cerf used to collect and publish, could offer an alternative to sitcom reruns on late-night television. Maybe. □

THEATER.

STEPHEN HARVEY

Sophisticated Ladies

As every stager of Broadway musicals should know by now, fans of the genre are an impatient but generous lot. An inert second act, star performers with letha: ; imbs and phlegmatic voices—all will be overlooked if you manage to put over the tone and attitude you want your show to have during its first ten minutes. The late Gower Champion underscored this axiom with that breathtaking image with which *42nd Street* commences: the curtain rising on what looks like 200 feet pounding the parquet in a deafening time-step. None of the ever more intricate and opulent routines punctuating the subsequent two hours quite match the impact of the show's first moment but it hardly matters—the audience has been carried aloft on the spirit of the thing, tickets now on sale through 1988.

Michael Smuin, who assumed the helm at *Sophisticated Ladies* during a troubled out-of-town tryout, may be a recent initiate to the musical theater fraternity, but he certainly knows the score. Properly, his approach is as different from Champion's as the music of Duke Ellington is from the Tin Pan Alley tunes of Al Dubin and Harry Warren. Where *42nd Street* starts out by pulverizing the patrons with sweat and know-how, *Sophisticated Ladies* disarms you with its casual insouciance. Right after four "Sophisticated Gentlemen" in olinding white hurtle across the stage in a style half-Moiseyev, half-Cotton Club, Gregory Hines and Judith Jamison subdue the spectators by giving the impression of doing nothing much with unmatchable ease and verve. Dressed down in vaudevillian checks and stripes, they sail through a two-step out of a speeded-up silent movie, as if the notion had suddenly struck them that this might just be a super way to start the show. Hines has spent years hoofing in clubs and lesser revues waiting for the star spot in a show of this scale, but his heavy-lidded playfulness implies that the whole experience is just an unexpected treat. Jamison may be a pre-eminent diva of modern dance, but the nonchalant cheer in her stride and smile persuades you that this is her natural habitat after all.

This particular illusion may falter slightly as the show continues, but much of *Sophisticated Ladies* is marvelous at masking painstaking craft with an air of artlessness. The ingenuity of the show's construction lies in part in its very invisibility. No tacky thread of spoken continuity links the numbers together, à la *Bubbling Brown Sugar*, and Ellington's songs aren't grouped according to chronology or even shared moods or musical style, most of the time. Nevertheless, Smuin has managed to create a unified onstage world that breathes on pure essence of Ellington. Framed by Tony Walton's Deco neon scribblings, and garbed in Willa Kim's spangly 1920s chemises and lurid postwar raunchery, the cast inhabits an imaginary cityscape where brassy *boîtes* and furnished rooms for one exist right next door to each other.

The director and his co-choreographers tweak the kitsch of those night-spot production numbers of yore, and revel in their sassiness at the same time. One of the Duke's cornier songs, "Caravan," is exalted into great comic nonsense when an airborne dancer named Gregg Burge turns his walking stick into a propeller and himself into the silver-sprayed body of a single engine aeroplane, with a complement of swooping choristers for wings. "I'm Just a Lucky So-and-So" becomes an animated comic strip as Hines, airily brandishing a stogie, pilots a squat yellow cab whose fenders are manufactured out of the spare parts of four scrunched-up chorus boys.

Although such resourceful gimmicks make for considerable fun, *Sophisticated Ladies*' real marvel is its skill at summing up a number with a succinct and totally unanticipated visual punch line. Indifferent Hines and affection-starved Jamison exchange choruses of "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" and "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart," climaxed when she ensnares him with just about the lustiest kiss I've ever seen in the theater. Noting Hines's newly found ardor, the self-satisfied Jamison saunters toward the wings, one finger languidly repairing the damage to her lipstick—he's been vanquished, and we've been ravished. More startling yet is the triumphant and heretical way Hines concludes his solo tap marathon in the second act. After five minutes of bent-waisted, jut-jointed dazzlement, he eschews the customary cacophonous finish; slowing down to an amble, he sticks out one foot and with one cleated toe describes an arc on the boards, and that small raspy sound brings a satisfying chill to the viscera.

Smuin approaches the more poignant side of Ellington with considerable daring as well. In addition to Jamison, whose insinuating way with a song was denied us during all those evenings at the City Center, the director has two first-rate songstresses at his disposal. Terri Klausner is a clarion belter who treats "Hit Me With a Hot Note and Watch Me Bounce" as if the world were her trampoline; she's no slouch when it comes to jitterbugging or deadpan comedy, either. Phyllis Hyman possesses a bluesy glissando which she flawlessly applies to "I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good," and also can make fun of herself when the occasion requires. The thing is that Klausner happens to be pert, pale and teensy, and Hyman imperious, tawny and about eight feet tall. They're so physically disparate that the idea of pairing them side by side for a straightforward rendering of "Mood Indigo" might well have backfired into parody. Yet the way they're placed on stage—sufficiently distant from each other to downplay the visual contrast,

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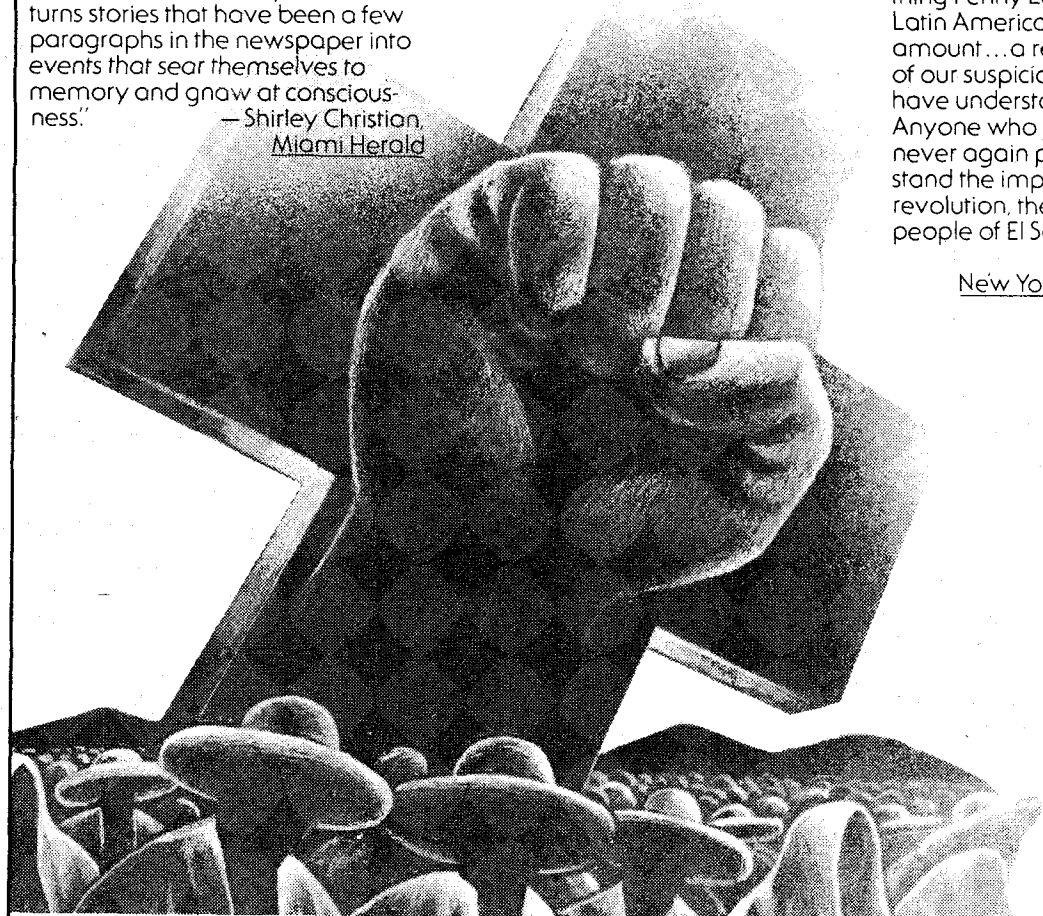

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yet close enough to stress their shared feelings—unerringly sets the atmosphere for the evening's emotional highlight, as they sing their souls out in a pair of Jennifer Tipton's more melancholy spotlights.

Amid all this, *Sophisticated Ladies*' rare missteps seem doubly gauche. Since a dancer of Jamison's training has a somewhat lower center of gravity than a show-stopping Broadway gypsy, it's rather unfair to pit her in one number against the sterling Hinton Battle and expect her to match up every kick and leap of the way—especially when they've been poured into identical tomato-red jumpsuits that emphasize her ranginess and his compact frame. Her two dramatic dance solos make full use of those eloquent Jamison arms, but the gestures mime the lyrics being sung with a disconcerting literalness, rather as if she were acting out the meaning of the words for the deaf. And just about every time P. J. Benjamin appears, his clownish adopted soul-brother routine is really distasteful, limbs shuffling and eyebrows arching in apparent imitation of Steve Martin in the early reels of *The Jerk*. Still, if the musical theater must be dominated by exhumations of our musical past, *Sophisticated Ladies* is as resplendent an example of the genre as we're likely to get. □

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Confidence
Nine Months
Oblomov

Confidence and *Nine Months*, two Hungarian films that opened almost simultaneously in New York City, treat essentially the same subject, a passionate and difficult love affair. They both focus almost obsessively on that drama: though other people move through the stories, they are very much on the periphery of the lovers' absorption in each other. *Confidence* is the more compelling work, but both are thoughtful accounts of people worth knowing—like most pictures from Eastern Europe. It is not easy to make films under a Communist regime, and those who manage to do so seem unwilling to spend their energies on trivia.

Confidence is about the need of a man and woman in love to trust each other. It is set in a Hungarian city, I assume Budapest, during the Nazi occupation. Kata (Ildiko Bansagi) is stopped by a stranger in the street, told that her husband may by now have been seized and that she must not return home. She is given a new name, a fictitious background and is sent to the house of an elderly couple on the outskirts of town, where she is to pose as the wife of one Janos Biro (Peter Andorai), a member of the resistance who has gone to earth there.

Like Kata, Janos is married, but they are brought together by the danger they share; the loyalties that would in normal times restrain them are ineffective and they soon become lovers. What makes the relationship painful, at times excruciatingly so, is not guilt but their inability to have faith in each other. Principally, it is his problem. Janos has trusted and been betrayed; he has decided that his only chance for survival is to believe nothing he is told and nobody who approaches him. As he says, it is not people he suspects but the times in which he lives.

Through a series of incidents, by turns touching, erotic, alarming, abrasive and even brutal, the film records Biro's gradual approach to a conviction that Kata is honest, that wherever danger may lie, it is not in her arms. The film ends inconclusively, yet says what it set out to say—that confidence is an essential ingredient of experience, and that without it, one becomes inhuman. Istvan Szabo, the director, stated in an interview he gave in *Hungarofilm* that confidence is fundamental not only "to personal relationships but in wider social terms, to the interrelationship between generations," and basic also to the handing on of historical experience. He chose to make a film in which this trust is literally a matter of life and death in order to make clear that, even then, when it can be extended to no one, life itself becomes a kind of death.

Confidence makes its case, quietly but forcefully, through a pair of intelligent, eloquent actors, who are directed by a man sensitive to the emotional responses of high-strung people struggling to behave well under great stress. Trust is perhaps at greatest risk today in the Communist states, but it is being tested everywhere. *Confidence*, thus, is a relevant film; dramatically, it is an absorbing one.

Nine Months, in a different context, also raises the question of trust. It is the by now not unfamiliar story of a woman who is determined, while giving her love without reservation, to retain command over her life, the conflict arising because the man cannot believe in love offered on those terms. Marta Meszaros, the director, points out, again in *Hungarofilm*, that such women have appeared in all her major films (*Just Like at Home* and *Women* have been shown here in the United States). In *Nine Months*, Meszaros is a persuasive advocate of love with equality—and a first-rate storyteller—though the terms she employs may seem a bit obvious to American viewers.

I don't mean to imply that we have achieved equal rights between the sexes (we can't even get the amendment passed), but only that we have become familiar with the basic debating points. I said much the same thing about *Portrait of Teresa*, and *Nine Months* has much in common with that Cuban film. Again, the action is sustained by the vivid performance of the female lead, in this case Lili Monori—a young woman who reminds me of Jeanne Moreau in that her face, rather sulky in repose, lights up with captivating warmth and intelligence when she is animated. And as in *Teresa*, the man (Jan Nowicki), though in every other respect resourceful and intelligent, is utterly incapable of understanding, let alone sympathizing with, the convictions of the woman he loves.

Nowicki is Janos, an engineer in a large industrial plant. Having hired Juli (Monori) as a worker, he promptly falls for her, wants to marry her and set her up in a house he is building, there to comfort and cherish him. He is dumbfounded when she enthusiastically becomes his mistress but refuses the rest of the package, and he is stricken with jealousy and suspicion when he finds that she has an illegitimate son whom she supports, while remaining on friendly terms with the father. He is nevertheless prepared to accept the boy if only Juli will give up her job, abandon her studies and settle down as a happy married woman. When he discovers that she is pregnant by him, his solicitude becomes virtually menacing, and though, like *Confidence*, the film ends somewhat ambiguously, the break between them looks hard to repair.

The trouble with such a plot is that once the problem is stated, there is little

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scope for dramatic progress. Between transports of lovemaking, Juli and Janos repeat the same scene: she setting forth the terms on which she is willing to go on living with him; he not hearing her and extolling the delights of domestic tranquillity. Voices become loud, faces grow red, fists are clenched and they fall once again into each other's arms. The impasse makes her seem mulish and him slow-witted.

But what held me, aside from the vitality of the acting (within the aforementioned limits) and the incidental views into contemporary Hungarian life (it seems prosperously spartan), was its reflection of social change occurring within an authoritative state. Communist regimes give the impression of being rigid, even prudish, in their insistence on traditional forms of personal behavior. Films like *Portrait of Teresa* and *Nine Months* suggest that their characters have attained a political and economic equilibrium sufficient to let them tackle at least one of the shifts in human relationships that have been preoccupying people in freer societies.

NOTE: *Nine Months* ends with a clinically detailed view of Juli giving birth. It seems that Monori was pregnant when she was engaged to play the part and consented to have her labor filmed for eventual use in this way. I have reservations as to the dramatic effect of the scene; close-up shots of childbirth are grueling and strike me as an invasion of privacy. In this case, they tend to distract one from considering how matters really stand between Juli and Janos when last we see them. On the other hand, and as the director undoubtedly intended, the footage is an exceedingly graphic way of stating that women must be free to make their own decisions.

Oblomov, Nikita Mikahikov's film from the novel, might well be called the Oblomov Suite. It captures the flavor, somewhat sweetened, of Ivan Goncharov's classic; it stages a series of memorable occasions from the book, recapturing the look of czarist St. Petersburg and the gentry countryside and satisfying one's idea of how the principal characters might have looked (Oleg Tabakov, in the title role, is especially persuasive), and in its own right is a gently paced, visually seductive, skillfully constructed motion picture of high quality. It also, I think, misses the greatness of Goncharov's novel by a country mile.

The movie is nostalgic, filmed in dreamy color, full of soft rain and soft tears. It is sad; it makes you sigh. The book is cruelly cleareyed but compassionate, funny, deeply concerned and tragic. It makes you think. No film can expect, in a matter of two or three hours, to convey the full power of a literary masterpiece, but I had hoped that Mikahikov, director of the deceptively gay, sardonically witty *Slave of Love*, would preserve the essence of *Oblomov*—as, for example, I thought Roman Polanski had done with *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

It would have been hard, perhaps impossible, to get that deep into Goncharov's novel. Hardy's people show what they feel largely by what they do, and the camera can record the action. The nature of Oblomov—what has made his name a byword in Russia—is that he cannot act. He talks, he thinks, he dreams, he hopes, but except when he is pushed by others, he cannot move. The life of the book, its tragic force, is in those conversations and ruminations; it is in the author's observations on his hero's plight, a running commentary so psychologically acute that it does not date even in our age of psychological concern. But a film must not dally over such visually static material, and Mikahikov, having prodded Oblomov from his couch, concentrates on the moments when, willy-nilly, the man is mobile.

What we see, then, is a nice, foolish, ineffectual, softly fat young man running clumsily toward a fulfillment he cannot achieve. But why he cannot and, more important, why the prize would have been available to him in the person of the adorable and spirited Olga (Elena Solovel), if only he could have made the effort, is but faintly stated. The film tries to suggest the moral and intellectual excellence of Oblomov that makes his wasted life so bitterly disappointing, but the cutting and editing necessitated by the need for visual material has shifted the balance of the story, making it touching, absurd, at times lovely. The ache of the book, which still grips one today, does not emerge.

From something he has said, I gather that Mikahikov thinks *Oblomov* is now not sufficiently appreciated in Russia, that he wanted to bring it again to the attention of his countrymen. As I said above, in its own right the film is of high quality; I hope it has, here as in Russia, the effect its director intended. □

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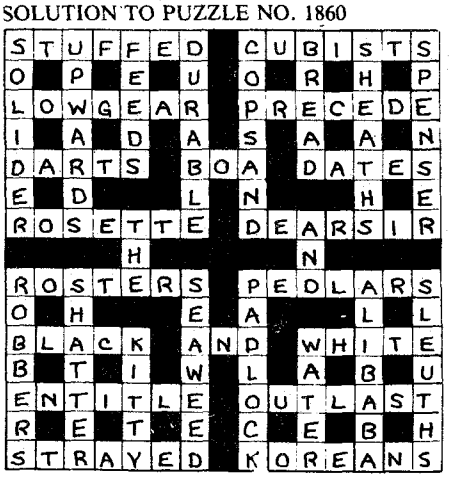

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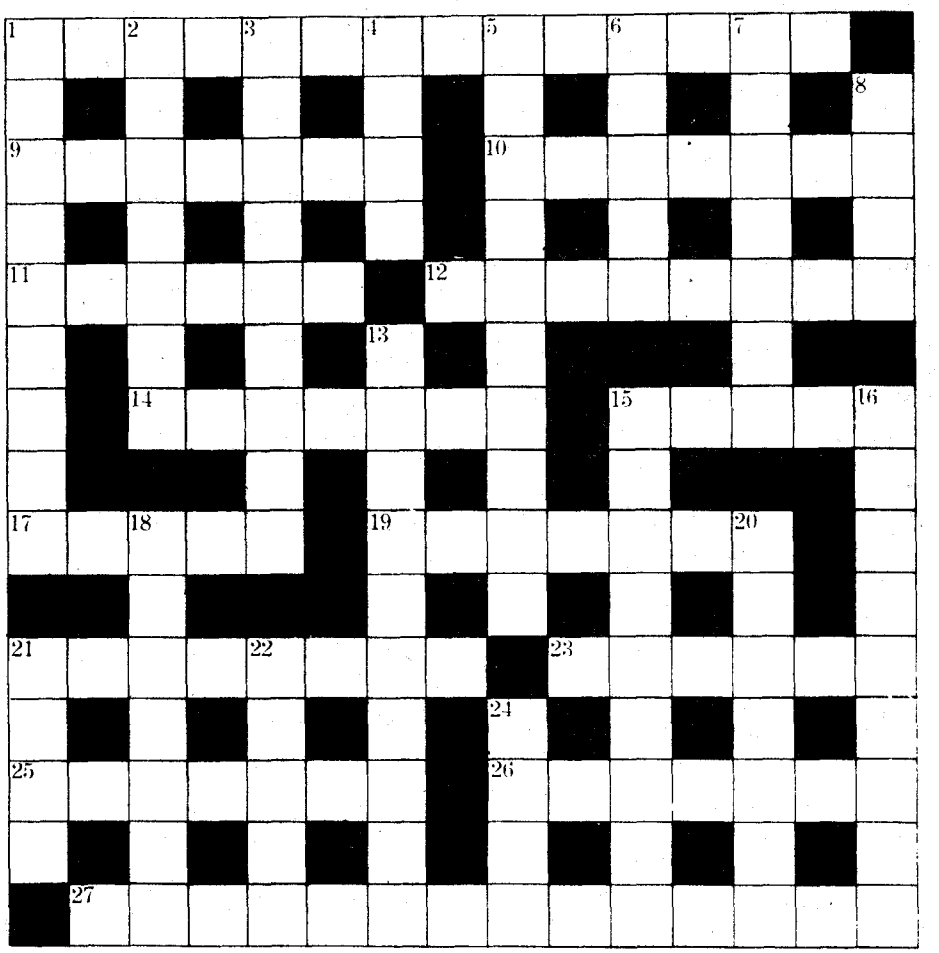

ACROSS

1 Well—like, "tinkle"? (2,5,2,1,4)
9 If the fourth note came after the sixth note here, it would be general instead of specific garments for the young. (7)
10 But the British fliers didn't run away—though some took a chance if things were. (7)
11 Species had a literary one, evidently—alternatively, I put my cards down. (6)
12 A sort of man eating tiger, or of tiger eating man—in any case, one leaves the country. (8)
14 In Texas, would it be equivalent to ten gallons around the capital of England, or is that just being malevolent? (7)
15 Wet down? Quite the opposite, as an admonition to the loquacious. (3,2)
17 One isn't pelted by demonstrators if urged this way. (5)
19 What the thief's victim might hear to be a lot of bananas to eat. (5,2)
21 Might almost suggest bone ash, which is just dandy! (4,4)
23 A provincial governor shown by a step architects take. (6)
25 Such a garment shows what one might be after a work-out. (7)
26 and 13 down Evidently it's the prison officer's time, according to James. (3,4,2,3,5)
27 and 4 down A liquid source for the moonshiner to operate on, far down! (It has application for the quiet thinker.) (5,6,3,4)

DOWN

1 and 21 down Proving the elite get everything—which is perhaps acceptance of misfortune. (3,3,3,4)
2 Is the Concorde passenger so intoxicated—and at such prices! (3-4)
3 Dance in the nude, in a way—a good yarn shouldn't end up this way unexpectedly. (9)
4 See 27 across
5 Riding a bike in difficult circumstances, or just preparing part of the breakfast? (10)
6 Ask around of uprising, as a way to confuse! (5)
7 Music possibly associated with rock, if old-fashioned. (7)
8 When the water rises, that's one way to make the papers! (4)
13 See 26 across
15 Said incorrectly to be superior to soft fruit—as things go. (9)
16 What a golfer might hope for at that time atop a famous building. (9)
18 Most serious appearing in a three-quarters ash-colored sleeveless garment. (7)
20 One who follows up the wrong way, with possibly surer conclusions. (7)
21 See 1 down
22 One might celebrate such a day in Africa. (5)
24 Equivalent to putting dots under something. (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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A Fourth Interview With The 116-Year-Old Magazine

There's much talk these days about the New Right. In your 116 years of existence as a liberal magazine you've seen a lot. What is your opinion of the New Right?

New? What's new about it? Only their haircuts and their polyester suits are new. These fellows have been saying the same thing since Jay Cooke, Jay Gould and J. P. Morgan.

You are referring to some famous businessmen of the nineteenth century, I believe.

That's right. Back when I was starting out we had what Mark Twain called "the Gilded Age." You had to admire those old Robber Barons, though. They stole the country fair and square. None of this public relations snake oil like today. "The public be damned," old William Henry Vanderbilt said. That's what *he* thought about public relations.

Do you mean big business is more public-spirited today?

No. Just more P.R.-minded. When Mobil steals the consumer's dollar, it takes out a long-winded ad saying it is fighting the energy shortage.

What else is different about big business today?

Well, back in the Gilded Age they believed in the survival of the fittest. If you went bust, you didn't run crying to the government for a bail-out. You just went out and stole another streetcar line or formed a new trust.

So Ronald Reagan's New Beginning doesn't impress you very much?

New beginning? I call it the same old soak-the-poor plan for bigger corporate profits. Back then they called it Social Darwinism; now they call it Kemp-Roth. In my day we had John D. Rockefeller. Now we have multinationals. Nothing much has changed. I guess that's why I'm still around. Somebody's got to tell people what to do when they get fed up. That's why we published Robert Sherrill on Big Oil and Mark Green on Cowboy Capitalism and Harry Caudill on the Synfuel Follies and David Noble and Nancy Pfund on Big Business Goes to College. If *you're* getting fed up, just fill out that coupon and subscribe to *The Nation*. I wasn't born yesterday.

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